MAY 2009 | **#94** | £4 / €7 / $13
WWW.DEVELOPMAG.COM

develop

GAME DESIGN | CODING | ART | SOUND | BUSINESS

Burn out

Our Quality of Life survey will wake you up to the real reason why developers are falling asleep on the job

ALSO INSIDE

Kojima on why the West won

London Studio celebrates five years of SingStar

Unity lands in London

PLUS ▸ THE DEVELOP QUIZ ▪ PARAMOUNT'S GAME PLAY ▪ DEVELOP 100 ▪ TOOLS NEWS & MORE

MOVE AT THE SPEED OF YOUR IMAGINATION

CREATE. ITERATE. INNOVATE.

Gamebryo LightSpeed™ is the newest leap forward in game development technology.

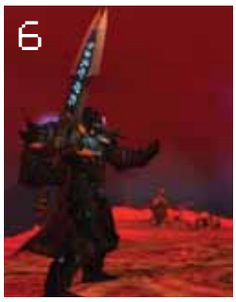
LightSpeed™ delivers the only professional technology for start-to-finish multi-genre/multi-platform game development. Enabling rapid prototyping, rapid iteration and real-time updates, LightSpeed™ simplifies game development through a data driven framework that opens doors to exciting gameplay possibilities. Iterate faster with Gamebryo LightSpeed™ and get your playable design into your team's and publishers' hands faster.

LightSpeed™ empowers innovation and encourages creative freedom.

Make the jump to LightSpeed™ today.

Copyright © 2009 Emergent Game Technologies, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Emergent, LightSpeed, Gamebryo, Floodgate and related logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Emergent Game Technologies, Inc., or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. Other names may be trademarks of their respective owners.

EMERGENT
GAME TECHNOLOGIES



develop THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY FOR GAMES PROGRAMMERS, ARTISTS, MUSICIANS AND PRODUCERS

Editor-in-chief
Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Executive Editor
Owain Bennallack
owainb@gmail.com

Publisher
Stuart Dinsey
stuart.dinsey@intentmedia.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising Manager
Katie Rawlings
katie.rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk

Staff Writer
Will Freeman
will.freeman@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising Executive
Jaspreet Kandola
jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk

Online Editor
Rob Crossley
rob.crossley@intentmedia.co.uk

Production Manager
Suzanne Powles
suzanne.powles@intentmedia.co.uk

Designer
Dan Bennett dan.bennett@intentmedia.co.uk

Managing Editor
Lisa Foster
lisa.foster@intentmedia.co.uk

Contributors
John Broomhall, Rick Gibson, Tim Ingham, Dave Jefferies, Mark Rein, Billy Thomson

intentmedia
Intent Media is a member of the Periodical Publishers Associations

Develop Magazine. Saxon House, 6a St. Andrew Street. Hertford, Hertfordshire. SG14 1JA
ISSN: 1365-7240 Copyright 2009 Printed by The Manson Group, AL3 6PZ

Tel: 01992 535646 **Fax:** 01992 535648
www.developmag.com

CIRCULATION IS OVER 8,000

Subscription

UK: £35 Europe: £50 Rest of World: £70

Enquiries, please email: dev.subscriptions@c-cms.com
Telephone: 01580 883 848
Charges cover 11 issues and 1st class postage or airmail dispatch for overseas subscribers.

Develop is published 11 times a year, reaching 8,000 readers throughout the UK and international market.

Contents

DEVELOP ISSUE 94 MAY 2009

ALPHA

05 - 11 › DEV NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE
Topline results from our Quality of Life survey; Blizzard rules the Develop 100; The Develop Quiz returns, plus all the big stories of the past month from the global games development industry

14 - 21 › OPINION, ADVICE AND ANALYSIS
Rick Gibson discovers a new Golden Age for studios; Owain Bennallack demystifies the iPhone; Billy Thomson comes clean on his OCD; and David Jefferies explains how you can get anti-aliasing right

20 › DEVELOP CONFERENCE 2009
We run through all the track keynotes for July's big development conference

BETA

24 › HIDEO AND SEEK
Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima on looking for opportunities in the West

28 › MONSTER CREATOR
The man behind Capcom's huge Monster Hunter franchise discusses future plans

31 › LIFE SENTENCE
COVER STORY: The full results of our Quality of Life survey

38 › SING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING
We take a trip to Sony's London Studio to celebrate five years of SingStar

42 › STAR POWER
Paramount's games boss John Kavanagh explains his plans for its digital division

BUILD

46 › UNITING THE WORLD
We talk to the team behind increasingly-popular engine Unity

48 › GUIDE: AI
The latest in the world of artificial intelligence

49 › KEY RELEASE: SUBSTANCE
Allegorithmic's procedural content tool goes under the microscope

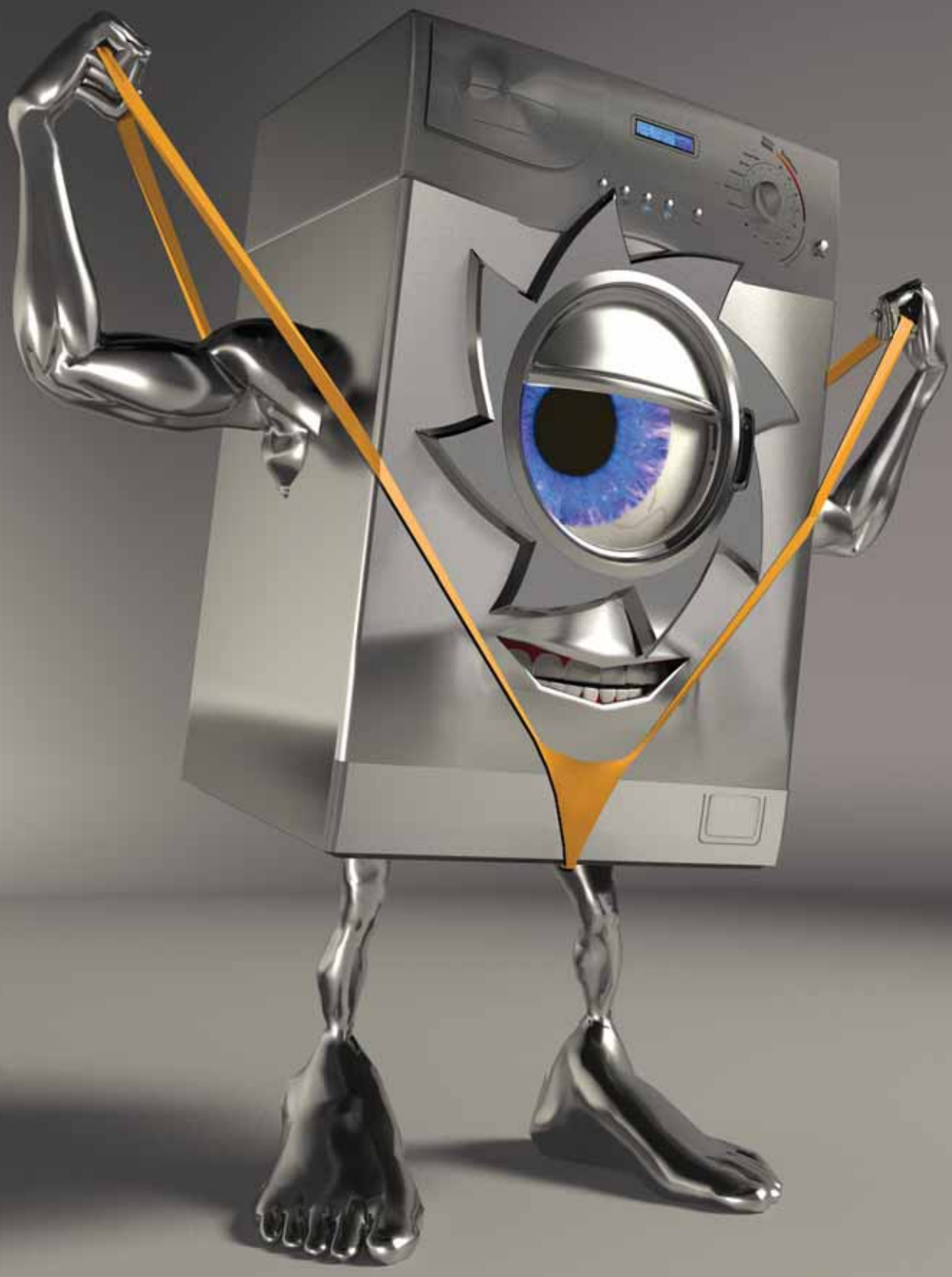
50 › HEARD ABOUT
John Broomhall talks to Microsoft's Guy Whitmore about the Develop conference

develop DIRECTORY 55 - 63
STUDIOS, TOOLS, SERVICES AND COURSES

CODA

65 › READERS' LETTERS & MY FAVOURITE GAME
Reactions to last month's issue, plus Warren Spector's favourite game(s)

Dynamic behavior. Clothing required.
Unparalleled support.



Havok Behavior
Havok Cloth

havok™

ALPHA

ADVENTURES IN GAMES DEVELOPMENT: NEWS, VIEWS & MORE

"Most of us game designers likely have our own minor forms of OCD that manifest in different ways…"
Billy Thomson, Ruffian Games, p15

Develop 100: your at-a-glance guide
News, p6

The Develop Quiz returns to London
News, p8

Develop Conference: the keynotes
News, p20

Industry comes clean on crunch

Develop's Quality of Life 2009 survey reveals that only two per cent of industry workers paid overtime despite average crunch of ten to 15 hours ■ Tiga responds with plans for HR forum and guide to employer best practice

by Ed Fear

Ninety eight per cent of game developers across the world do not receive paid overtime, despite being frequently asked to work an extra ten to fifteen hours per week.

That's according to over 350 industry professionals who had their say on working conditions through *Develop*'s Quality of Life in 2009 survey.

The survey was launched in part as a result of the controversy surrounding the International Game Developers Association and, in particular, Epic CEO Dr. Michael Capps, who suggested that Epic's staff would be expected to work 60 hour weeks as part of the corporate culture. The resulting argument split the IGDA membership between those that felt the organisation should be making a stand against such practices, and those who thought otherwise.

Similarly, our interview with Peter Molyneux in the March issue highlighted the changes Lionhead had made in its corporate culture in order to "stop ruining people's lives," in his own words.

The survey aimed to get an overview as to the current work/life balance experienced by regular everyday game studio employees, and explore how game developers felt the industry had improved since the EA_spouse incident, now almost at its five year anniversary.

The results – which you can find starting on page 31 – show that, while the 46 working hours per week figure is similar to the UK average of 44 (2001 data), only two percent of respondents received official overtime pay, with a surprising 18 per cent receiving no bonuses whatsoever above their basic salary.

> ***"We take the interests of the workforce very seriously, as do I think most of the MDs and CEOs."***
> Richard Wilson, Tiga

"It's critical that the UK industry invests in its workforce," said Tiga CEO Richard Wilson when presented with the results. "We don't have tax breaks or government support to help the games industry in general, so game developers have to rely on the skills and experience of their employees. That's a key competitive advantage for us, I think, because we do have a very skilled and very experienced workforce."

"There is obviously a particularly intensive crunch period towards the end of projects, but one of the important things shown in this survey was that the problem was somewhat down to unrealistic scheduling in order to meet publisher demands. So I suppose the response to that is that one would hope that over time developers in the UK will become more effective in dealing with publishers, and publishers will hopefully become more ameniable to the working needs of developers in order to make their schedules more reasonable. The trend towards self-publishing will also give developers more freedom to schedule their work, and would hopefully diminish the tendency towards crunch working."

One of the other interesting outcomes of the survey is that the overwhelming majority of respondents felt that games industry bodies should monitor and potentially restrict working hours.

"That's a very interesting outcome, actually," said Wilson. "Tiga is a trade association for MDs and CEOs, but I think it's important from our perspective to represent the games development industry as a whole. Ultimately it's the CEOs and MDs of studios that pay for Tiga and keep it functioning, but I think they'd be surprised if we had such a narrow perspective that we didn't cover the industry at large, and that of course covers the workforce."

In fact, the organisation had already made efforts to tackle the quality of life problem that stops the industry from attracting talent it might otherwise. "We recently set up an HR group for HR professionals in the industry, in order to share knowledge and develop best practice," Wilson explained.

"It's a small group at the moment, but we've had some leading companies involved and sharing information, so I hope that over the coming months ahead we will develop best practice procedures for the industry. It's at an early stage, but we take the interests of the workforce very seriously, as do I think most of the MDs and CEOs."'

Editorial

When it comes to crunch

Develop has charted major industry trends since our first issue almost ten years ago.

At the moment the rise of digital distribution, market expansion, small disruptive platforms, and a boom in team sizes and costs – plus the ways technology fits into the gaps around all these – is broadly the current state of play for our sector.

Previously the rise of middleware and the tortuous dismantling of the old studio model in favour of outsourcing were our preoccupations.

But so much for progress. As our salary survey in January and now our Quality of Life questionnaire prove, there is always sub-surface tension surrounding areas like staffing and human resources. Specifically when it comes to pay and overtime.

Crunch has been part of industry for some time. Yet the testimonials given in our survey show that 75 per cent of developers don't think it is necessary for creating good games. Similarly, 80 per cent or so say that unreasonable or unrealistic expectations cause crunch. 60 pe cent also say it has ruined their health. So it's clear that bad planning and unchecked ambition have created a vicious circle of overtime and misery for the troops.

There is an easy answer to all this – producers should plan better and, if it becomes necessary, overtime should be paid for. But that's hard to execute. And it's easy for us to throw stones from up here in our ivory editorial tower of words. Studios being told to spend extra money is probably the last thing they want to hear right now.

But if you want proof that the best studios are built on a philosophy that take these important issues into account, just look at two of the studios in the *Develop 100* who have been vocal about these issues.

Epic Games (which rewards staff generously for crunch, by all accounts) and Relentless (which claims to have never worked overtime) might appear to be on opposite ends of the spectrum given that one is pro and the other anti crunch. But ultimately they have the same aim, to make sure staff are happy and their bank balances well-fed. It says a lot that both can claim decent places in the *100* when other, reportedly less-rewarding, workhouses have slipped down the listing this year.

Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Blizzard topples Nintendo from the Develop 100 throne

World of Warcraft studio takes first place in fifth edition of our controversial and widely-discussed global development team list

World of Warcraft isn't just famous for big swords and bigger quests – it's a huge commercial and creative hit, too

by Michael French

WORLD OF WARCRAFT creator Blizzard Entertainment has taken the crown as number one studio in this year's *Develop 100*.

Nintendo has been dethroned in the fifth version of our annual list detailing the worlds most successful and bankable studios. The Japanese giant had ruled the listing for the last two years.

Blizzard takes the top spot thanks to its sterling success with *World of Warcraft* – the franchise generates over $1bn in revenue each year, its expansion packs cause genuine excitement when launched at retail, and the MMO has truly entered pop culture's collective consciousness.

The result will no doubt be much discussed and argued, but still an authoritative guide to the key studios shaping the games industry today.

Free with this issue, the *Develop 100* 2009 edition is based on different criteria than in previous years.

Ditching the UK-only sales figures focus, the list has been put together by the entire *Develop* team, taking into account a number of factors: end of calendar year 2008 charts distributed by GfK-ChartTrack (UK), NPD (USA) and Famitsu (Japan); Gamequarry.com reports aggregating review score data and critical commentary from Metacritic.com; we considered general industry standing including studio reputation, publisher relations and general all round brilliance.

The new criteria hasn't just widened *Develop 100*'s focus to include the power of online distribution giants – the smaller companies making a big splash manage to make it into the list too. So for the first time Nexon also makes the list, as does Club Penguin and even Facebook gaming pioneers Playfish.

But old favourites make it to the list too – the top ten features Nintendo, Rockstar North, Infinity Ward and Ubisoft Montreal, four studios which factor highly in the list every year due to their commercial clout and overall product quality.

In total, 31 European studios make the list (25 of them from the UK), with 30 USA teams, six canadian studios and 23 Japanese.

The full list is printed for reference to the right – the full book itself should have been included in the bag with this issue when you received it.

DEVELOP 100: #1 – #100

1	Blizzard Entertainment	51	Rebellion
2	Nintendo	52	Luxoflux
3	Rockstar North	53	Bungie
4	EA Canada	54	Atlus
5	Capcom	55	EA Mythic
6	Ubisoft Montreal	56	HB Studios
7	Treyarch	57	Monkey Bar Games
8	Infinity Ward	58	Codemasters
9	Epic Games	59	The Creative Assembly
10	Bethesda Softworks	60	Big Fish
11	Konami	61	Crytek
12	Traveller's Tales	62	NCsoft
13	Sega Studios Japan	63	Firaxis
14	LucasArts	64	EA DICE
15	Neversoft	65	Koei
16	Sora	66	Relic
17	Kojima Productions	67	Rare
18	Media Molecule	68	Digital Chocolate
19	Nexon	69	Club Penguin
20	EA Black Box	70	CCP
21	Valve	71	Zoë Mode
22	Lionhead	72	Evolution
23	Level 5	73	Volition
24	EA Tiburon	74	Bizarre Creations
25	Yuke's	75	The Cooking Mama Co.
26	Harmonix	76	Heavy Iron
27	A2M	77	EA Bioware
28	EA Redwood Shores	78	Gearbox
29	Jagex	79	Sumo Digital
30	Game Freak	80	EA Bright Light
31	Maxis	81	Polyphony Digital
32	Cat Daddy	82	SCE Japan Studio
33	EA The Sims Studio	83	Funcom
34	Insomniac	84	Team 17
35	PopCap	85	Silicon Knights
36	SCE London Studio	86	EA Montreal
37	Criterion	87	Rockstar Leeds
38	Sports Interactive	88	Grasshopper Manufacture
39	Ubisoft Paris	89	Inis
40	Rockstar San Diego	90	Amusement Vision
41	Krome Studio	91	Ubisoft Shanghai
42	Gameloft	92	Beenox
43	Crystal Dynamics	93	Blue Tongue
44	Square Enix	94	Matrix
45	Bandai Namco	95	Blitz Games
46	Black Rock Studio	96	Dimps
47	Relentless	97	Intelligent Systems
48	EA Pandemic	98	Playfish
49	Eurocom	99	Frontier Developments
50	EA LA	100	Q Games

The Develop 100 is distributed with every copy of Dvelop this month

Develop Quiz returns for summer

Key networking event returns on June 18th ● Takes place at London's Sway bar in Holborn ● Great pizes up for grabs

How clever is your studio? Find out by battling with rivals at The Develop Quiz, which returns this summer for its third competition.

Taking place at the Sway Bar in Holborn, London on Thursday June 18th, the latest outing for this essential networking event will pit 20 teams of five against each other.

Studios, publishers, QA, recruitment and localisation companies are all invited to attend, with a full night of entertainment and competition on offer.

First prize is a £2,000 advertising credit in *Develop* print or online, plus a trophy and bottle of champagne for each team member.

Second prize is an interview over lunch with the *Develop* editors, plus a bottle of champagne each.

And even third place also wins a bottle bubby per person.

Entry is £195 per team of five, which covers quiz participation, free bar and dinner.

Those interested should contact Jaz.Kandola@intentmedia.co.uk to book their place as space is limited.

Exclusive sponsorship opportunities are also available.

It's the third outing for the popular evening event – Codeworks GameHorizon were the victors of the inaugural Brighton quiz, while Zoe Mode took home the trophy at our second event which took place in London during December.

DEVELOP DIARY

YOUR COMPLETE GAMES DEVELOPMENT EVENT CALENDAR FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD...

14-16 JULY 2009 develop in brighton

DEVELOP CONFERENCE 2009
July 14th to 16th
Brighton, UK
www.develop-conference.com

The Develop Conference and Expo is where the European development community comes together to learn from each other and share experiences, be inspired by world renowned experts and gurus, get up-to-date with the latest development tools and techniques, make new contacts and catch-up with old ones.

Over the last three years the Develop Conference and Expo has rapidly established itself as the leading event for games design and development professionals in Europe. Last year, over 1,200 developers from every level of the development community descended on Brighton to meet, learn, share and network with their peers.

MAY 2009

GDC CANADA
May 12th to 13th
Vancouver, Canada
www.gdc-canada.com

NORDIC GAME 2009
May 19th to 20th
Malmo, Sweden
www.nordicgame.com

JUNE 2009

E3
June 2nd to 4th
Los Angeles, USA
www.e3expo.com

THE DEVELOP QUIZ
JUne 18th
London, UK
Jaz.Kandola@intentmedia.co.uk

GAMEHORIZON CONFERENCE
June 23rd to 24th
Newcastle, UK
gamehorizonconference.com

IDEF
June 30th to July 2nd
Cannes, France
www.idefexpo.com

JULY 2009

DEVELOP CONFERENCE 2009
July 14th to 16th
Brighton, UK
www.develop-conference.com

DEVELOP INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
July 15th
Brighton, UK
www.developmag.com/develop-awards

CASUAL CONNECT SEATTLE
July 21st to 23rd
Seattle, US
www.develop-conference.com

GAMES CONVENTION ONLINE
July 31st to August 2nd
Leipzig, Germany
www.gamesconvention.com

AUGUST 2009

EDINBURGH INTERACTIVE
August 10th to 16th
Edinburgh, Scotland
edinburghinteractivefestival.com

GDC EUROPE
August 17th to 19th
Cologne, Germany
www.gdceurope.com

GAMESCOM
August 19th to 23rd
Cologne, Germany
www.gamescom-cologne.com

CHINA GDC
August 27th to 29th
Shanghai, China
www.chinagdc.com

SEPTEMBER 2009

GDC AUSTIN
September 14th to 18th
Texas, USA
www.gdcaustin.com

GAME CONVENTION ASIA
September 17th to 20th
Singapore
www.gc-asia.sg

OCTOBER 2009

GDC CHINA 2009
October 11th to 13th
Shanghai, China
china.gdconf.com

MONUMENTAL

Proud winners at the Fast Growth Business Awards 2009

Join a winning team

Currently hiring:

Artists, Programmers, Designers and Project Managers

Closing date 31st May 2009

For more vacancies and competitive benefits please visit

www.monumentalgames.com

WorldView

Our monthly digest of the past month's global games news…

DEALS

Saber Interactive has signed up to use **Havok**'s Destruction technology in a number of new IPs.

Rebellion has been chosen by **Bethesda** to take over development of SAS FPS *Rogue Warrior* for PC, 360 & PS3.

Bethesda has also signed up **A2M**'s *Wet*, which was in publishing limbo after Activision dropped it.

Autodesk's Kynapse AI middleware is to be used in the **US Army**'s game, *America's Army 3*.

Realtime Worlds has announced the appointment of a new CEO: it's former Take Two COO and one-time Capcom Europe chief Gary Dale.

NCsoft is the latest to sign up to **Valve**'s Steam. Several of its MMOs will be sold via the digital distribution service.

Insomniac has signed up to use Dutch company **Xsens**' MVN motion capture technology in a number of upcoming games.

Climax has been signed up by **Konami** to 'reinvent' the first *Silent Hill* game for the Nintendo Wii. When done the new version of the title will also be released on PS2 and PSP.

US UNIVERSALLY SPEAKING

TALKING JAPANESE

LOCALISATION AND QA firm Universally Speaking has opened an office in Tokyo.

The firm, whose HQ is in Cambridgeshire, will offer the same range of localisation, QA, audio, and DTP services out of a new base in the Shinagawa district of Central Tokyo. It will be run by Tokyo-born manager Toru Sasaki, who has been with the company since March 2008. The team will cover Japanese and the nearby regions' Korean and Chinese dialects.

"We identified the growing trend of Japanese and Asian games companies wishing to make a large impact in Western Markets," explained Vickie Peggs, Partnertrans' MD. "Over the past two years, we have actively been developing new relationships and clearly pinpointing the objectives of Japanese publishers for Western entry. Our efforts have paid off, and with a strong client base of companies on side it was vital to offer a secure facility for our Japanese clients, based in Tokyo. In fact, our Japanese clients requested it, so we made it happen."

www.usspeaking.com

LONDON, UK

UKTI U-TURN ON INDUSTRY EVENT FUNDING

After last year cutting funding that supported UK developer attendance of events like GDC, the UK Trade & Industry department has today beefed up the funding individual companies can apply for.

Details released by the organisation say UK companies can now apply for up to £1,800 for up to six events.

Studios must agree to attend at least one event in a different market as part of the remit to help encourage the trade and export of UK skills contracts and goods.

Events like Game Connection, the various GDCs, Tokyo Game Show and E3 are the kind of shows UKTI expects to help developers attend.

www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

ABERTAY, SCOTLAND

DEVELOPMENT GIANTS JOIN DARE TO BE DIGITAL

The biggest names in gaming are getting involved in this year's Dare to be Digital game development competition.

Industry heavyweights such as Rockstar North, Sega, Realtime Worlds, Black Rock Studio and SCEE will be available to assess and mentor students competing for a place in the University of Abertay Dundee's development 'hothouse', where successful entrants will eventually go on to form teams and build a prototype game.

This pool of developers and publishers will be sent out to initial selection events in London, Liverpool and Glasgow, where talented student teams will be spotted.

Successful entrants will then be sent to University of Abertay and split into teams of five and tasked with prototyping a game within ten weeks. Here, individuals from within the industry consortium – known as the 'Developer Accord' – will offer their advice and support.

www.daretobedigital.com

VANCOUVER, CANADA

VALVE DOMINATES ELAN AWARDS

Valve's *Left 4 Dead* was the name repeated over at the third annual ELAN Awards, with the co-op survival-horror hybrid picking up four prizes.

Taking place at the Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver, the ceremony saw Valve pick up awards for Video Game of the Year, Best PC Game, Best Game Design, and Outstanding Technical Innovation.

Bethesda's *Fallout 3*, meanwhile, received two of the awards for Art Direction and Best Console Game.

www.theelans.com

PARIS, FRANCE

UBISOFT PRORITISES INTERNAL TEAMS

Ubisoft plans to focus less on third-party publishing and more on internally-developed games, according to CEO Yves Guillemot. He revealed the new strategy as part of the firm's end of year financials.

Ubisoft raked in $1.5 billion in revenues during its fiscal year 2009, it said during its fourth quarter earnings call from last month.

This was "one of the most competitive environments we have ever had," said Guillemot. Nevertheless, Ubisoft claims it has the second best operating margin in the industry – despite the tough market and economic slowdown – because of the company's key initiatives.

They are: Internalise production as much as possible to control development; be based in countries with competitive cost advantage; and develop own intellectual properties to increase visibility and maximize margins.

These tactics have allowed Ubisoft to take bigger risks, says Guillemot.

For example, *Tom Clancy's HAWX*, which sold over one million copies, was developed in Romania. It ended up generating revenues that were 30 per cent more than the cost of development.

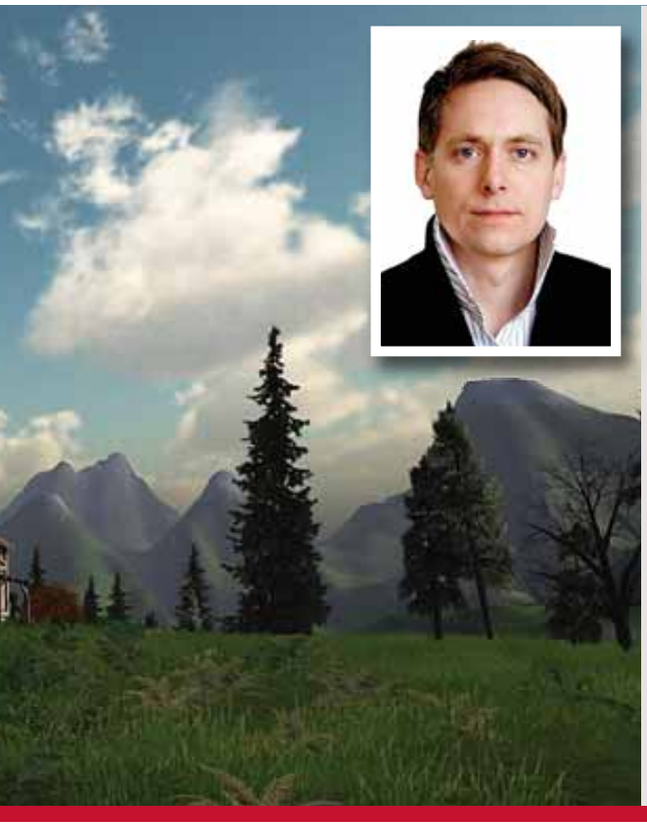
Prince of Persia, which was developed in Montreal, sold slightly below 2.5m copies at a lower price point, says Guillemot, but it still generated margins at 30 per cent of cost.

Focusing on internal development not only allows Ubisoft to have better control over its costs, notes Guillemot, but it also offers more control over a game's quality and release.

www.ubisoftgroup.com

FOR THE LATEST NEWS...
HEAD TO WWW.DEVELOPMAG.COM

Our online resource features news, features, analysis and commentary posted daly, and is avaulable via the web, mobile, RSS and daily email and news alert blasts.



UNITY HEADQUARTERS MOVED TO LONDON

POPULAR MIDDLEWARE firm Unity has moved its HQ to London to provide it better access to industry talent – and presumably score more licensing deals.

The firm revealed to *Develop* that it plans to move some of the staff at its Copenhagen base over and will staff up quickly

"It's the centre of the world to some degree – there's a big pool of people, flights to everywhere.," explained David Helgasson, CEO and co-founder (*pictured inset*). "Copenhagen is, in some ways, a bit of a backwater – we were situated there because of historical reasons, actually. We've been able to attract really good people, actually, from places like Lithuania and the US – we've got very few Danes working there, actually.

"We want to keep the HQ in Europe because, timezone wise, it just works best. You get a little bit of everybody's day no matter where they are. In the US, you don't really get anyone until the tail end of the day, and it's tough to sync with Asia. Europe, in that sense, is a perfect fit."

Just two months ago, the firm signed up former Criterion man David Lau-Kee as chairman.

www.unity3d.com

LONDON, UK

75 PER CENT OF UK STUDIOS TO GROW WORKFORCE

Tiga's Business Opinion Survey has revealed that 75 per cent of surveyed studios are looking to grow their workforce within the next six months – with over 20 per cent expecting 'significant' growth.

According to the report, which surveyed 32 of Tiga's 150-strong business membership, the UK's development workforce fell by 2.5 per cent in 2009 as the recession hit developers hard.

However, the results – which Tiga says come 'overwhelmingly from small- or medium-sized businesses' – point to a promising upwards trend for the UK development sector.

Only nine per cent expected to lay off more staff within the next six months.

52 per cent said that they are finding it more difficult to borrow money due to six months ago due to the recession.

Also revealed in the survey is that 78 per cent of UK development businesses expect that their business will improve within the next six months to some degree. No companies surveyed thought their business would get 'significantly worse'.

www.tiga.org

Top 10 Developers Chart – April 2009

#	COMPANY	COUNTRY	PRODUCT
1.	**Nintendo**	**Japan**	**Wii Fit**
2.	Capcom	Japan	Resident Evil 5
3.	EA Redwood Sh.	USA	The Godfather II
4.	Treyarch	USA	COD: World at War
5.	EA Canada	Canada	FIFA 09
6.	Midway Newcastle	UK	Wheelman
7.	Level 5	Japan	Professor Layton
8.	Sega	Japan	Mario & Sonic
9.	Yuke's	Japan	WWE Legends
10.	Infinity Ward	USA	COD4: Modern Warfare

Chart Supplied By: **Chart***Track* charttrack.co.uk | **ELSPA** elspa.com

SAY WHAT?!?

"The biggest advice I had for him was to start playing Fallout 3 instead of Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. It has more of a story."

Friends star Matthew Perry offers advice to 17 Again co-star Zak Efron. We liked the COD4 story. Does that make us shallow?

"The Japanese games industry has become a closed environment, with no new people coming in, no new ideas, almost xenophobic."

Square Enix boss Yoichi Wada perhaps lets slip the real reason why he wanted to acquire UK publisher Eidos

"After seeing the reaction to the game in the United States and hearing opinions sent through phone calls and e-mail, we decided several days ago not to sell it."

Konami explains why it dropped Atomic's Six Days in Fallujah as quickly as it signed it. Translation: We bottled it01

"The smell is activated when the virtual soldier walks past a market or a tiny side street. We are trying to discover if smell enhances perception."

So says the boffin devising a 'smell effect' games peripheral. Of course it enhances perception – the real question is if anyone really wants to buy such a piece of kit.

COMMENT: BUSINESS

A new golden era for games?

by Rick Gibson, Games Investor Consulting

It's a fascinating time to observe the games industry, particularly in terms of innovation. The console cycle nears its peak. Traditional publishers are refocusing budgets towards smaller portfolios of established franchises and proven IP and away from high-risk new IP. Contrastingly, online games companies are thriving, rapidly growing user bases, maintaining continuous pipelines and experimenting with new IP.

Where their offline colleagues are becoming risk averse, online companies are riding a wave of commercial and technical innovation. Developments in technology and online distribution have combined with revolutions in commercial models to allow a new generation of developers to create games and get them to market for costs that have not been seen since the 1980s. That time was a golden age of innovation in terms of genre, gameplay and technology. I believe we are in a new golden era for games today, and we see most of the dramatic innovations in the online world; but just how innovative are today's online companies and why?

RISKY BUSINESS

First, the risk profile for online companies is fundamentally different.

Triple-A in the console world means huge teams, eight-figure budgets, unprecedented complexity in production, massive and protracted investment in technology, a value chain that leaves little for independents, and mounting risk for everyone involved.

Triple-A in the online world is harder to tie down as it changes with platforms, genre and consumer. Technology is focused on customer management over engines. Production is continuous, not project-by-project. Online games involve constant maintenance, but the value chain is shorter and more generous, giving rise to developers that are often publishers.

Online games, which grossed $10bn in 2008, are experiencing a pace and breadth of innovation that outstrip offline colleagues. Companies are finding unprecedentedly profitable ways to drive revenues online and we have written frequently about online gaming's high levels of commercial innovation. We see significant technical innovation in companies finding new ways to create and deliver compelling content, and to understand and enable consumers to play with others. But there is still massive potential for creative innovation.

Revolutions in gameplay are relatively rare in the overall industry, but most successful online games are not breaking new ground in core gameplay. Runaway success *Travian* is fundamentally a heartstoppingly-slow real-time strategy game. Gameforge's *OGame* or Bigpoint's *Seafight* have their origins (and graphics) in games over a decade old. Most casual games' arguably date back 15 to 20 years. Zynga or Playfish's pet games rely on *Tamagotchi* ideas. Most hardcore MMOs (including *World of Warcraft*) feature core play unchanged since *Ultima* and *Wizardry*.

Perhaps it's a question of evolution, not revolution, particularly in the behaviour

> ***"Many UK independent studios are ignoring the opportunity to return to their game-changing roots that online offers."***

online games induce in players. *Travian*'s gameplay and timed services encourage truly novel collaboration between players. Gifting, item auctions and limited edition collectible items are introducing some strange and interesting behaviour amongst social network gamers. The complex political alliances between clans in casual MMOs can result in unforeseen outcomes. To keep pace with their users' changing behaviour, these games must evolve as rapidly, never really hard-launching anything, running live betas for months, constantly experimenting and refreshing their games with new content. Eventually, incremental improvement will generate new games species, but the radical steps involved in the creation of truly new genres are harder to uncover.

So where are the new genres? You have to look to the boundaries of the industry to find games that are challenging the definition of what a game is. iPhone and Facebook's burgeoning App developers have conjured

Gameforge's OGame is a text-based, resource-management MMO. It's an online phenomenon but one built on a lot of older ideas

successful, revenue-generative games out of thin air from subjects bizarre and diverse. Some look across the range of games based on user-customisable physics engines and argue that they have evolved a new genre. Perhaps the keys may be in the hands of non-professionals given the chance to innovate with the simple game building tools of YoYo's Game Maker or Flash. Whatever your opinion, it's been a long time since new formats could be made and distributed to a mass market so cheaply or democratically.

Surely we should look to our veterans for such fundamental innovation? The 1980s and 1990s saw new genres arise, frequently from the UK's independents.

That era's teams still form the backbone of today's studio sector, but traditional UK independents – the economics of whose business are becoming harder to sustain – are moving online slowly and in surprisingly low numbers. Many are ignoring the opportunity to return to their game-changing roots, while the costs are still bearable and routes to market are manifold. These lower barriers to entry mean that online has higher innovation potential and is crying out for the outstanding creative, technical and design skills found in abundance amongst independents. The question, perhaps challenge, is this: will you follow the likes of Realtime Worlds, Sports Interactive and Monumental into this brave, if often over-hyped, new world and create the next wave of new games genres?

Rick Gibson is a director at Games Investor Consulting, providing research, strategy consulting and corporate finance services to the games, media and finance industries.
www.gamesinvestor.com

Time to step out
of the shadows
BLITZ
TECH
Complete game development toolset
Cross-platform engine for all major consoles
Dedicated technical support team
As seen in the forthcoming NAMCO BANDAI Games America title *Dead to Rights®: Retribution* developed by Volatile Games
Available for licensing **NOW**
BlitzTech.com

Actual in-game screenshot. Dead to Rights®/TM variably registered in the US and other countries around the world. © 2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games America Inc. All rights reserved.

COMMENT: INDUSTRY

The end of the honeymoon for the iPhone App Store

by Owain Bennallack

Apple's App Store has been a tremendous success. Launched on July 10th last year, the iPhone software storefront hosts more than 25,000 third-party applications. And as we go to press Apple has celebrated over one billion individual downloads, proving huge traction for the service in the space of just nine months.

True, expectations in certain quarters were so optimistic that some projections will have been missed. Early talk of $25 games soon looked silly, with even $10 games now a rarity. The most popular paid-for games cost $5 or less; the most popular apps are free.

Price deflation hasn't been the only hiccup. Congestion in the marketplace has led to calls for everything from a revamp of the store's categorisation and listings to premium sections and a ban on free or Lite software. More pragmatic iPhone developers have explored off-store marketing to drive App Store sales, as well as giving games away for free, though such approaches clearly have implications for margins.

> ***"Apple has done what the mobile industry failed to do in ten years – training customers to repeatedly download and buy software."***

But those companies who have been smart, fast or lucky have prospered – and not only the headline grabbing start-up developers with their $500,000-grossing debuts. Gameloft, for instance, has embraced the platform. The mobile game giant still makes most of its money via traditional operator portals, but it's off to a great start on iPhone, releasing more than two dozen titles and selling millions.

For iPhone owners, it's all good. Cheaper prices and more choice have no downside for them, at least in the short-term, and iPhone users love their phones. Apple has in ten months done what the mobile industry failed to do in ten years – training its customers to repeatedly download and buy software over the air, and turning them into enthusiastic evangelists for mobile content.

THE HARD WORK BEGINS

2009 will throw up several new challenges for the App Store ecosystem, however.

1. Platform fragmentation

Everyone expects a new iPhone this summer. Currently the differences between the two iPhones and two iPod Touches can all be handled by one SKU, but this can't continue forever. Anything that meaningfully changes the technical specs – a higher screen resolution, or much faster hardware – will provide opportunities for those who exploit its features, but will also usher in the era of multiple SKUs. Developers may feel doing two (or three, or four) iPhone versions is straightforward compared to other mobile platforms, but how will different versions be designated in the App Store, and will gamers understand what they're getting?

2. iPhone OS 3.0

The introduction of cut-and-paste made the headlines, but games developers are busy exploring other upcoming advances. Peer-to-peer support will open up local gameplay, and support for subscriptions and (much-requested) micro-transactions will enable new revenue models for iPhone developers. But educating consumers as to what they're paying for is vital – confusion over mobile subscriptions became mainstream news a few years ago, and stifled the then-burgeoning mobile content business.

3. Saturation

Thought of an amazing iPhone application? Chances are it's been done. The next 25,000 iPhone apps will mainly be glitzier, cheaper or functionally superior versions of existing applications. This is to be expected, but nobody has yet handled such a digital market with very few barriers to entry before, so who knows how sustainable it is. The danger is that consumers are unable to find the best content and are disappointed by what they do buy, or that they give up in the face of overwhelming choice.

Courtesy of Apple

Apple's iPhone is a phenomenon – that we know. But how will the industry handle the challenges the device might face before 2009 is over?

4. Pricing and App Store positioning

The App Store is already hit driven, and pricing is trending towards free. Subscriptions and micropayments may offer a replacement revenue stream, but if Apple and its third-parties want to grow the business beyond the expanding iPhone user base, a solution that helps more costly or ambitious projects reach their consumers and stand distinct from free, low-end or novelty offerings would be desirable.

Given that the App Store owes much of its success to its simplicity, it will be interesting to see how both consumers and Apple handle the increasing complexity of the iPhone universe – whether you're a telecoms rival, a game developer, or one of the many *Develop* readers who wishes to go on loving your iPhone.

Owain Bennallack is executive editor of *Develop*. He edited the magazine from its launch until its February 2006 issue. He has also worked at *MCV* and *Edge*, and has provided consultancy and evaluation services to several leading developers and publishers. He is also chairman of the Develop Conference advisory board.

COMMENT: DESIGN

Obsessive Compulsive Designer?

by Billy Thomson, Ruffian Games

Some of the guys I work with think I have a minor strain of OCD. Don't get me wrong; I'm not constantly scrubbing away at my hands under boiling water or anything, but if I'm honest they probably have a point. I can be a little obsessive at times and, if it is in fact a mild form of OCD, it definitely takes a more benign form. Take my constant desire for symmetry in level design, my need to create task lists and tick them off when complete, my constant nagging insistence on consistency, my endless nitpicking about pretty much anything I'm presented with, my inability to go out wearing creased clothes and my weird lining things up problem, that I won't bore you with. All of which can cause my workmates to want to scream in frustration or point and laugh.

For this month's column I'll briefly talk about each of my little habits - and more specifically how I think they can have both a positive and negative effect on my work as a designer, and how I believe every good game designer must have a little bit of an obsessive compulsive disorder deep down in them somewhere.

SYMMETRICALLY INCLINED

I've always loved symmetry in architecture, which made creating well-balanced multiplayer levels nice and simple for me: I didn't constantly feel the need to shake things up from base to base, and everyone knows the best levels tend to be mirror images, so I was made for the job.

The problem hit me when I had to branch out and do location designs focused on multiple approaches – I had to reign in my love for symmetry and go off-piste, which I have to admit I was struggling with. Thankfully I managed to hire an incredibly talented level designer who did a fantastic job on *Crackdown*.

Sometimes you just need to accept defeat and bring in the right man for the job.

TICKING THE BOXES

I think everyone loves ticking off completed tasks on a list. It makes you feel like you're doing something worthwhile, making progress, achieving something. Which is why the Xbox 360's Achievements and Gamerpoints feature was a dream come true for me.

The need to create a list of minor tasks for players to complete with Gamerpoints as a reward may have felt like a chore to some designers, but it was a joy for me. Creating all the cool little off the wall Achievements was great fun on *Crackdown*, and it's something that I hope I can do in every game I make from this point forward. I just need to make sure I don't alienate the gaming public with too many hidden orb-type Achievements.

> ***"The need to create elaborate tasks with Gamerpoints as a reward may have felt like a chore to some designers, but it was a joy for me."***

CONSISTENCY IS CRUCIAL

Inconsistency quite simply eats away at me. As you'll learn I have many pet hates, but inconsistency has to be in my top one. It really drives me nuts!

I like games that are consistent through the entire product: game controls, UI design, box art, marketing material, merchandise, even fonts if I can get away with it. To be fair, very few games get this right, although the GTA franchise is a great example of how this can be done very, very well.

I've personally never managed to work on a game that's nailed this yet, but I'm certainly doing my best to tick that box on my list.

NITPICKING NIGHTMARE

This one drives my work mates mad, but I also think it makes me far more effective at my job. It doesn't make me a better designer, but just stops me from settling for something that I don't think is up to scratch. I'll keep fighting for a new feature or improvement while others grow weary of the endless arguments and compromise or leave it alone entirely, while I only seem to get more frustrated and determined to get my way.

While I believe this single-minded approach can be of massive benefit, it can also be an issue if taken too far. Too many games never see the light of day because the vision holder simply won't compromise, leading to schedule slippage which can ultimately get a game cancelled. So while it's one of my most effective quirks, I occasionally need a level headed producer to tell me to stop being an idiot and leave it alone. (You know who you are.)

Okay, so there are clearly no revolutionary design theories here, but I do think that most of us game designers likely have our own minor forms of OCD that manifest in different ways. Whether or not they make us better designers is all down to how far we let them off the leash.

It's okay to accept you have an obsessive streak when it comes to designing games

Billy Thomson is the creative director of newly-formed developer Ruffian Games. Billy has over 13 years experience of designing video games, including design roles on *Grand Theft Auto* and *GTA2*, before working as lead designer on Realtime Worlds' celebrated *Crackdown*.
www.ruffiangames.com

LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER IN GAMES LEVEL DESIGN

£27,999 - £43,622 PRO RATA + PENSION + EXCELLENT HOLIDAYS • FULL OR PART TIME

It's a no-brainer. So, let's cut straight to it. You'll use the creative half of your brain to work on your own projects, advance the field of games design and inspire the next generation of games designers. Whilst you'll use your practical side to deliver lectures, conduct groundbreaking research and maintain excellent industry links. You can even choose to join us part time and stay in industry in a 50-50 split. At the cutting-edge of thinking, you've always done things differently and you've never been afraid to try something new. **So, if you've a degree or equivalent and want to discover more about the challenge, training and creative freedom we can offer you - call Paul Docherty, Section Leader on 01642 342652 for an informal chat or email p.s.docherty@tees.ac.uk To apply visit www.tees.ac.uk or contact Human Resources, Middlesbrough, Tees Valley TS1 3BA. Tel: 01642 342200. Email: jobs@tees.ac.uk Ref: 6075.** Closing date: 19 June 2009, 12 noon.

UNIVERSITY OF TEESSIDE

No Lecturers were harmed in the making of this advert.

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

COMMENT: CODING

Anti-Aliasing

by David Jefferies, Black Rock Studio

Most game developers get the anti-aliasing in their games wrong. Or, to be more specific, the way most of us do our gamma correction causes the anti-aliasing to produce incorrect results.

For games, anti-aliasing is a set techniques used to help us represent high-resolution images on a low-resolution, pixel-grid based, LCD or CRT display. Most anti-aliasing techniques are variations on Supersampling Anti-Aliasing (or SSAA). With SSAA the image is rendered to a high resolution buffer and then the pixels are averaged to produce the lower resolution output image.

For consoles the high-resolution image can be either double the width (known as two times or 2X) or double width and double height (known as four times or 4X) anti-aliasing. They commonly use an optimised version of SSAA called Multi-Sample Anti-Aliasing (MSAA) which minimises the number of times the pixel shader is run.

GAMMA RAYS

So where does gamma correction come into all this? Well, if this isn't set up correctly, it will send your anti-aliasing (and other things) all screwy. And this is the bit that very few developers do correctly.

Gamma correction is a colour space operation. It transforms the linear RGB colour space into a non-linear colour space that's more suitable for viewing on an LCD (which has non-linear intensity range) and for viewing by the human eye (which responds to variations in intensity in a non-linear fashion). The RGB colour space after it's been gamma corrected gives more resolution to the darker colours which correlates better with the way that our eyes work.

We have to be very careful about where we perform the gamma correction, because it's vital that all pixel shader operations are performed in linear space. This is because maths just doesn't work properly in any non-linear number system. Mathematical operations such as add, subtract, multiply or divide will produce unexpected results in anything other than a linear system.

So in an ideal render pipeline the textures would be in linear colour space, all the pixel operations would be performed in linear colour space and then right at the end (during the tone mapper if you're HDR) the output image is gamma corrected ready for the display drivers to convert it for display.

The render pipeline in your game is almost certainly set up to do exactly that. So what's the problem?

The problem is that, unless you've invested time in this problem, the textures that you're feeding into your render pipeline are not in linear colour space. Any image taken with a digital camera or anything drawn using Photoshop will be in a format such as sRGB, which has an effective gamma of 2.2. This means all your pixel operations are being performed in a non-linear colour space and so when the MSAA averages the pixels to reduce aliasing, effectively adding the values together and dividing by the number of samples, the numbers it produces are wrong. And you can see that they're wrong by the 'roping' effect on screen, whereby some of the pixels in a line appear darker than others – giving the effect of a coiled rope.

> ***"Most developers get the anti-aliasing in their games wrong. Or, to be more specific, their anti-aliasing produces incorrect results."***

So what can we do about it? Firstly, be aware of the issue and be explicit in your render pipeline about where you perform gamma correction. A render pipeline that reads sRGB textures as RGB will produce an output image that is too light and so it's likely that you're compensating for this somewhere in the pipeline by darkening the scene down. By doing this you're going to lose accuracy which will introduce banding into the scene.

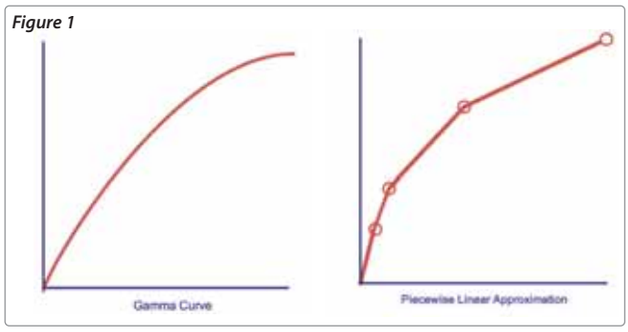
Secondly, be aware of which colour space your textures are in. If you choose to keep your textures in gamma space then current generation consoles can be set up to perform the conversion back to linear space in the pixel shader for 'free'. However, this conversion is a piecewise linear approximation and so introduces artifacts

itself (*see figure 1*). Storing all your textures in linear colour space isn't the perfect solution either because they don't have good resolution for darker colours.

The team at Valve solves the problem by pre-computing textures to take account of the inaccuracy of the piecewise linear approximation, so that when the conversion is performed by the hardware it produces the correct results. For more info see tinyurl.com/valvegdc.

It may seem like a lot of effort just to address some visual artifacts but the aliasing and banding detract from the solidity of the image, and so a decent fix makes a big difference to the visual fidelity of the game you might be working on.

Figure 1



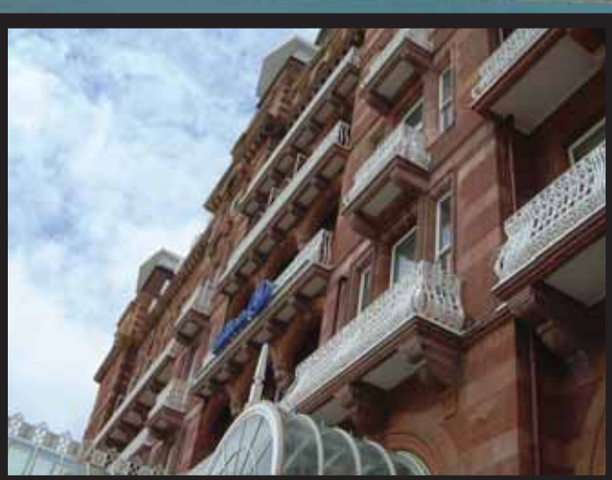
David Jefferies started in the industry at Psygnosis in Liverpool in 1995, eventually working on *Global Domination* and *WipEout 3*. He later moved to Rare where he worked on the *Perfect Dark* and *Donkey Kong* franchises. Next came a move down to Brighton to join Black Rock Studio (which was then known as Climax Racing) in 2003. On this generation of consoles he's been the technical director of *MotoGP'06* and *MotoGP'07* before starting work on new racer *Split/Second*.
www.blackrockstudio.com

Your potential. Our passion.®
Microsoft®

GOOD TEAMS SCORE.
FAST TEAMS SCORE OFTEN
AND DEPLOY EARLY.
Microsoft®
Visual Studio®
Team System
DEFY ALL CHALLENGES. TOGETHER.
Visual Studio® Team System 2008 helps you build in quality from the opening minute, manage code from multiple sources, and keep your code base and database in line.
Download a trial at microsoft.com/uk/teamsystem

The Keys to Brighton

In just two months' time, the cream of games development will once again descend on Brighton for the Develop conference. And a raft of industry notables have already signed up as track keynote speakers, joining main speaker Dave Jones. Here, we run through the big speeches…



DEVELOP CONFERENCE & EXPO

WHEN: July 14th to 16th

WHERE: Brighton Metropole Hotel, UK

www.developconference.com

EVOLVE – TUESDAY, JULY14TH

14 JULY 2009 develop evolve

The event's opening one day track features two promising talks from forward-looking development experts…

EVOLVE

RESETTING THE GAME

by David Perry

With experience in a variety of aspects of making and selling games (including, he tells us: working with Hollywood directors, Hollywood studios, licensing in/out, IP creation, patenting, trademarking, budgeting – deep breath – creative direction, designing, programming, outsourcing, funding, production), Perry will look at major industry changes. Today your mum is as likely to play games as her grandson, the platform could be an iPhone, a console or a Facebook application, she could be paying through advertising, subscription, per download or via micro-transactions – and she's probably not playing a platform game. Where is she taking us? Perry will answer the question, promising a no-bull guide to the future – and some controversial conclusions.

THE LONG TAIL AND GAMES: HOW DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION CHANGES EVERYTHING. MAYBE.

by David Edery

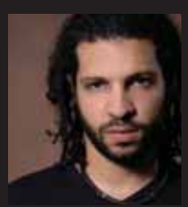
You've heard it all before: digital distribution and The Long Tail are going to fundamentally change the way that platform holders, publishers, and developers do business. It will decrease the importance of hit games, make niche titles wildly profitable, replace marketers with recommendation engines, and finally give quality content the success it so richly deserves… maybe. This lecture will explore the current realities of The Long Tail, and how you can succeed given those realities. Edery is the former worldwide games portfolio manager for Xbox Live Arcade and now an independent consultant.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15TH & THURSDAY, JULY 16TH

ART

THE ART OF LITTLEBIGPLANET: A BIG MEDLEY

by Kareem Ettouney and Mark Healey, Co-Founders, Media Molecule



Kareem and Mark discuss the process of setting a visual style that is 'both versatile and cohesive'. The talk will touch on a broad range of subjects, from the desire for *LittleBigPlanet* to be a collage of visuals mixing the ancient with the contemporary; how the look and functionalities of *LittleBigPlanet* are highly integrated; and how cutting-edge visual technology was used to serve the vision of user-generated content.

Media Molecule was formed by a small team that consisted of a bunch of friends that worked on Healey's *Rag Doll Kung Fu*. The team discovered that the smaller approach to development worked better for their creativity and struck out as a team when the game became a big success on Valve's Steam service. *LittleBigPlanet* was their first game.

DESIGN

BUILDING LEGO WORLDS - ONLINE, OFFLINE, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

by Jonathan Smith, Development Director, Travellers Tales and Ryan Seabury, NetDevil

While TT Games continue to build on the success of *LEGO Star* Wars with new multi-platform LEGO games, *LEGO Universe* is a Massively Multiplayer Online game in development at NetDevil Studios in Colorado. Together, Smith and Seabury will jointly explore the similarities and differences between their approaches to 'the infinite and ever-changing world of LEGO play'. They plan to look at how audiences expectations have changed as online/offline boundaries have blurred and will draw upon audience and user-testing research, market analysis, and lots of specific LEGO gameplay examples. It will be relevant for anyone interested in online gaming, MMO development, working with licensed properties, or a younger audience.

PRODUCTION KEYNOTE

BRIDGING THE GAP: EXPERIENCES LEARNED WITH AGILE PROJECT MANAGEMENT ACROSS MULTISITE, MULTICULTURAL AND MULTILINGUAL PROJECTS

by Lisa Charman, Asssociate Producer, Ubisoft and Patric Palm, CEO Hansoft

This session will give an overview of common challenges faced when implementing an agile method in a large organisation. Specific challenges connected with shared projects on multisite, bridging geographical distances, cultural differences and language barriers will also be addressed. The session is based on Ubisoft's own first hand experiences learned with Agile project management across multisite, multicultural and multilingual projects as well as Hansoft's experience working with agile implementations in more than 20 countries worldwide.

14-16 JULY 2009 develop in brighton

BUSINESS

OUT OF THE BOX(ED PRODUCT): THINKING FOR AN ONLINE AGE

by Jeff Hickman, Executive Producer, Mythic Entertainment

Hickman will speak about the challenges developers face as they move beyond the box product and single player models and into online and multiplayer models. The evolution of thinking and process from box revenue to other forms of monetisation can be daunting and much more difficult than it seems. How do you turn a product into a service and how in the world do you monetize your product for the long term? Hickman promises to share lessons learned from *Dark Age of Camelot* and *Warhammer Online* as he pulls the audience 'out of the box'.

MOBILE

MOVING GAMES TO A NEW BEAT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOKIA'S DANCE FABULOUS

by Mark Ollila, Nokia

Finally, handsets are getting the sort of personalised content that the take-everywhere device and service the mobile phone suggests the potential of and deserves. Nokia's Ollila explains how the developer of *Dance Fabulous* incorporated a phone owner's music collection into its rhythm action gameplay and hooked into N-Gage Arena's passionate community of users to reach an untapped audience.

AUDIO

THE RUNTIME STUDIO IN YOUR CONSOLE: THE INEVITABLE DIRECTIONALITY OF GAME AUDIO

by Guy Whitmore, Director of Audio, Microsoft Game Studios

When it comes to adaptability, visuals are a decade ahead of audio in games. 3D assets, real-time lighting, shadows, texture maps, particle effects, and procedural animation, provide the processes for a highly adaptable visual environment. By contrast, fully-mixed wave files, common in the majority of games today, are like 2D art; you can only see one side. They're big and clunky and typically pre-processed. Yet there's a desire and need to hear sound and music from all perspectives, from many directions, in various surroundings, and in different contexts. In order to effectively react and adapt to a non-fixed game timeline, audio content must be authored and kept in smaller component parts until runtime, when they are assembled and mixed. So take your entire music studio and sound design suite, including mixers, synths, samplers, DSP, mics, speakers; virtualise everything and make it adequately efficient, then drop it all into your game authoring environment. Stir in a non-linear DAW, the right game ties, and some mixing intelligence, and there you have it; a complete runtime studio, ready with the flexibility to turn on a dime to meet the needs of the game.

We understand. You're passionate about gaming. You see things other people don't see. Everywhere you look, you see opportunity. We get it. Because as recruiters specialising in the video games industry, gaming is our passion too.
We have the best gaming jobs waiting for you right now. We help a host of big name developers and publishers to secure the biggest talents for their teams – all the way to the top, for everything from creatives to HR to finance.
So no matter what stage you're at in your career or what your discipline is, why not talk to us about where we can take you next? Email us at games.team@amiqus.com or visit amiqus.com/games
amiqus
GAMES
We know your world
Gaming. It gets to you.

BETA

DEVELOPMENT FEATURES, INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS & MORE

"You can't plan emergent behaviour – you have to listen to your community."
Mike Haigh, SCE London Studio, p38

The real Monster Hunter
p28

Quality of Life survey: The Results
p31

Of Paramount's importance
p42

Hideo and Seek

Japan's most notorious auteur on how the West has won, p24

New place for Hideo

He's one of the world's most loved (and hated) game designers – but, as Hideo Kojima takes up a new business role at Konami, is he in danger of becoming a businessman first? **Ed Fear** sat down with him to find out all about his new job, his efforts to make Kojima Productions a more global studio, and why he wants to work with Western developers…

Hideo Kojima is a man painfully aware of his own mortality. In fact, it's the first thing the *Metal Gear Solid* creator points out to us when we meet.

It's not often we kick off an interview with one of games development's many 40-something men with a reminder of the end that awaits us all. Just like it's not often that a famed game designer spends three years of his life working on a game that, essentially, charts the demise of a gaming icon as he too comes to terms with old age.

"Someone asked me earlier if I'd consider making a smaller game now that I've finished a project as massive as *Metal Gear Solid 4*," he smiles. "My answer is that, personally, I'd love to work on a smaller project. But, thinking about the time I have left to survive, I'd rather spend that time working on bigger projects."

He's similarly focused when asked if he'd consider making a game with a retro aesthetic. "No, not interested at all. I don't want to demean these games, it's just that I think I have a different role: to create new things, using the latest technology, that haven't been seen before. And I'm pretty happy with that role."

Although that role sounds similar to what his PlayStation epics have been doing for years now, certain aspects are definitely different. Often described as an auteur – he insists on being called 'kantoku' in Japanese, which means 'director' (with film connotations) – Kojima is a man whose eye for gaming expands past simply mechanics and design.

DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

And yet, like many of the 'old' creatives in the industry, he now finds himself in an increasingly business-focused position; typified conveniently with his recent promotion to the schizophrenic-sounding 'managing director, operating officer and studio head'.

Is one of the world's most visionary game designers becoming a paper-pusher?

"I'm still in charge of Kojima Productions, and my responsibility is still creating games that people love," he reassures us. "But, you know, I've been going to other studios, and thinking about how we can make Kojima Productions a more global studio. If anything's changed, maybe I have a little bit more responsibility to pass all of the success that Kojima Productions has enjoyed to the other Konami global studios – from engines and technology, to management techniques and the way we make games. So it's about taking our expertise to all of the teams at Konami, helping the 'base' of the company rise alongside Kojima Productions."

The studio tour, he explains, was a quiet affair last year – with *MGS4* done, Kojima visited various US studios including Infinity Ward. Although inter-studio cooperation isn't exactly rare, for a Japanese studio head to visit foreign studios and attempt to absorb their practices caused a quiet stir.

"I thought that it was about time that I maybe saw other studios outside of Japan," he asserts. "There was a surprising amount of differences between what I saw and how we do things at Kojima Productions.

> ***"There were 200 people working for me on Metal Gear Solid 4. 200 people versus me. The most difficult thing was keeping everyone on the same page."***

"What I'm thinking now is, okay, if we want to be a global studio, how do we do that? What things do we need to take? There are some good things we should copy, but some other things we shouldn't. I'm thinking about what steps we should take in order to become a bigger, more global studio – that's my focus at the moment.

"It's about looking at the places where we think that Kojima Productions is losing against our competitors and doing something about that – that's the motivation for the tour, really. It's not just about technology either – it's about marketing, business, the whole thing. How they manage within the team. We tried to see, absorb and learn all of this."

HOW THE WEST HAS WON

The idea of competing with the West is a prevalent one throughout much of the Japanese industry of late. Be it luminaries from Capcom or Square Enix, there's been a realisation that, in many areas, Japan's best can feel as if they're second fiddle to the work done by teams in North America and Europe. And while Kojima is quick to admit that he shares their concern, rather than seeing it as a negative, he feels it opens the potential for collaborations – opportunities for companies with different practices to come together and work on something that wouldn't be possible alone.

"Yeah, I've definitely thought about it, and I'd love to," he says when we ask if he'd work with any of the studios he visited. "I have no idea of when, though.

"There are many great development companies outside of Japan, and I think they've all got their own special ways. If I collaborated with them, I wouldn't want to say 'you should create this way, or use this colour, or program this like this'. I want these production studios to do what they do best, and that's what I hope to do with them in the future."

The strive to rebuild Kojima Productions isn't borne from just a sense of competitiveness: it's clear that he was, to a certain degree, uncomfortable with the scale of the production of *Metal Gear Solid 4*.

"The PlayStation 3, being a next-generation machine, meant that the amount of content we had to create was excessive. It wasn't easy. At its peak, there were 200 people working for me on *MGS4*. The way I look at it is being 200 people versus me. The most difficult thing about that was trying to keep everyone on the same page."

And, of course, big teams means big costs. It's easy to pidgeonhole Kojima Productions as the *Metal Gear* studio, but it has a number of other series under its belt; from the balletic robot fighting of *Zone of the Enders* to the solar-powered action RPG *Boktai* via the three-strong *Kabutore!* stock/foreign currency exchange games. With those spiralling costs, and his desire to personally move on from the *Metal Gear* series, does that make Kojima more risk-averse when trying out new IP?

"We have to think that the industry that we're in is a hit industry. You've got to love risk. In the past, it was odd, because any game we released was a gradual hit – everyone thought that was easy. But now it's as normal as any other industry – talented producers and creators are needed. You've got to think about worth: games that are

Metal Gear Solid 4 (above) told the tale of hero Solid Snake accepting his old age. It turned out more auto-biographical for creator Kojima than you might think

worth it sell, and those that aren't don't. It's as simple as that.

"When technology gets better, costs go down. But then, if you try and do something new, costs are going to go up a bit. I don't think it can continue limitlessly, but think of a Hollywood movie: if you want to do something really high-spec, then you have to think about a high cost. But it won't go limitlessly, because it's all set now basically.

"I think in the near future it'll be like Holywood – there'll be someone who funds, and a creator. In the past the person who funded was the developer or the publisher, but I think in the future they'll be a clear distinction between those who fund and those who create."

HEAVY METAL

Of course, we can't end an interview with Hideo Kojima without asking about *Metal Gear*. Repeatedly, he has tried to leave the development of the game to one of his hand-picked protoges. And yet every time he ends up taking over due to fan pressure – or, possibly, due to the obsessive need for control that tends to follow auteurs around.

Kojima is unusually candid when asked if he feels a pressure to continue *Metal Gear* even after the retirement of Solid Snake. "Yeah, there's absolutely pressure there. Maybe if I quit Konami that pressure might be a bit better, but since Konami handles the business side of our operations, yeah, there's definitely a demand continue a series as successful as *Metal Gear*."

So perhaps that is the space for a Western studio to help with – be it with remakes, like the *Twin Snakes* partnership with Silicon Knights, or on a new title? Maybe he can't let go just yet. "I think that *Metal Gear*, well, that's…" he pauses, carefully chosing his words.

> ***"In the future this business will be more like Hollywood. There will be a clear distinction between those who fund games and those who create them."***

"I think that what you might expect from a *Metal Gear* might only be possible from Kojima Productions, rather than leaving it to an outside studio to produce a satisfactory product. But, then again, if I got an offer saying a company wanted to do it, maybe!"

HIRING NOW

CONTRACT ROLES

- UI Artists
- VFX Artists
- Gameplay Programmer
- AI Programmer
- Server / Hosting Programmer
- UI Programmers
- Web Programmer
- Tools and Technology Software Engineers
- Audio Software Engineer
- Senior Game Designer
- Level Designers
- Content Designers
- Producer
- Assistant Producer
- Assistant Live Producer

realtime worlds

APB ALL POINTS BULLETIN

POWERED BY UNREAL TECHNOLOGY

CRACKDOWN

www.realtimeworlds.com

© 2006-2008 Realtime Worlds, Inc.
APB and All Points Bulletin are trademarks of Realtime Worlds, Inc.
and REALTIME WORLDS is a registered trademark of Realtime Worlds, Inc.
Unreal is a registered trademark of Epic Games Inc.

Monster Invasion

Can the mind behind one of Japan's most popular games replicate his success in the West? Monster Hunter creator Ryozo Tsujimoto speaks to **Will Freeman**…

Tsujimoto has reason to grin: his title is the biggest selling in Japan. And there's plenty Western studios can learn from his team, he tells us

Capcom's PSP game *Monster Hunter* is a true sensation in Japan. In 2008 it was the best-selling game in the country – but despite that, and at a time when Capcom is creating globally powerful hits like *Resident Evil 5*, it has failed to capture the eye of audiences in the West.

The series' creator and producer, Ryozo Tsujimoto, plans to change all that, however – and he is now looking at ways to make his studio's game a success in Europe and America. Here, he explains to *Develop* his team designed an online co-op game that could be played by anyone – even commuting business men playing in just 15 minute bursts – and how the hit title has helped 'normalise' gamers to online play…

It took a few iterations for the franchise to become the big hit it has been on PSP. What challenges has the game's production encountered?
Actually the development started ten years ago, when at Capcom there was a strong movement to promote console network gaming, and this was at a time when networking was only really seen in PC games. At this time three titles were produced – *Auto Modellista*, *Resident Evil Outbreak*, and finally *Monster Hunter*.

It was conceived as an action game where everyone joined together to hunt and for large monsters using large weapons.

After creating two titles on PS2 we realised that there was a barrier in network gaming of that type. It was very difficult to overcome the hesitance of consumers to play network games. Both from a technical viewpoint, and because the game was rather complex.

At that point we felt it was probably better to move to a handheld, the PSP, and present a more casual gameplay environment where players can actually see the person they are playing with, while they are still enjoying genuine network gaming. Partly the decision was seen as way of normalising ordinary consumers into network gaming, and doing that finally realised the concept of the very first *Monster Hunter*. It just benefits the game's concept, and in fact it benefitted the whole idea of consumer network gaming.

Obviously you made the right decision, and Monster Hunter remains one of the most popular games in Japan. Did you ever expect such success?
When *Monster Hunter* started we were very ambitious about the title, and of course we knew we wanted big sales. We hoped that a *Monster Hunter* game one day would hit one million sales, but no one back then could have ever have expected that it would be as popular as it is now.

Why is it such a success, do you think?
The biggest factor was definitely that the game moved to the PSP and was played on a handheld gaming device. When the PS2 version came out the game itself was highly reviewed throughout the review sites, and it was really very social, but as a console game it was very difficult for good word of mouth to spread. There was a limitation on the rate that new people picked up the game.

So it was the move to PSP that we have to thank. The handheld meant players were meeting outside and advertising the game themselves. The fact is that they could demonstrate the gameplay to anybody that they met with. That made it very easy for Capcom to maintain the hype by organising events and festivals based around the game, and those have proved very helpful for us.

Looking forward, how do you plan on expanding the reach and popularity of Monster Hunter?
One thing we have not done yet that we would really like to do now is to focus on the global promotion. We need to take the game to the whole world. The first time we tried, but it didn't necessarily happen, so in the future we plan to spread *Monster Hunter*'s success globally.

Is the concept something which can translate easily overseas?
What has been lacking here in the past with the *Monster Hunter* series was definitely the

promotion. The PR and marketing for the last two titles have been very limited, but this time we're taking things far more seriously, and Capcom as a company are taking things more seriously in terms of the promotion.

Currently in Europe the *Monster Hunter* franchise has been fairly quiet, so the first step is to actually just spread the name. No one here knows what the game is so we just need to spread the name of *Monster Hunter*.

The next step will be to explain and convey the information on what the game actually is. Then next we want to let people play the game and experience it for themselves. Finally, we need to maintain support for the community, to keep people coming together playing the game. It's very important for Capcom to strategically plot this path.

In recent months some Japanese developers have suggested that Western studios are taking a lead in terms of the quality of work produced. Is the apparent gulf between Western and Eastern developers something you recognise?
I agree that the way games are being made is changing, and I do see that there is room for improvement and much can be learned from the Western developers by the Japanese. However, on the other hand while I see that Western developers do seem to make games very logically, and perhaps efficiently, Japanese creators tend to make games artistically, or rather they craft games. They may even be irrational about some details, but they definitely know about the crafting of games, and attention to detail.

> ***"Western studios do seem to develop more logically and efficiently, but Japanese creators tend to make games more artistically. They craft games."***

So what could Western developers learn from the work of Japanese studios?
I certainly wouldn't want to convey that Western developers are in any way behind, but there are certainly some good practices to learn from. In Japan there is a talent for the small details, and there they tend not to cut corners.

Of course that can affect the development process positively and negatively, and I don't think development problems are confined to the Japanese or Western markets. They both have their own style.

As you're one of the few third-party developers to create a truly successful PSP game, what's your advice to those making games for the format?
One thing is to analyse the situation in which a PSP game is played. When games can be played anywhere, you have to consider the environment in which the player chooses to be in when playing.

Then, taking that environment into account, you have to consider how long people will be playing a game for. You have to offer games playable in 15-minute chunks because in Japan nobody really has large chunks of time anymore, but just has lots of time in small segments.

Even the businessman *Monster Hunter* fans who have played over a thousand hours have probably never player more than two hoursa day in small chunks. That's a huge consideration.

Given the relatively low development support PSP is receiving in favour of other formats, would you consider creating versions of the game for DS and iPhone?
Because Nintendo DS and the iPhone both have distinct features it is an interesting idea, but until there are good ideas about how to utilise those features it is quite pointless to realise something. Although the two devices are very interesting, I've not quite come up with anything relevant yet.

GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Supported by
bluegfx SpeechlyBircham one NORTH EAST

23-24 JUNE 2009
The Sage Gateshead, UK
www.gamehorizonconference.com

Find out about emerging opportunities, groundbreaking technologies and new business models at the GameHorizon Conference.

Speakers include:

Dave Jones
Creative director
Realtime Worlds

Ian Livingstone
Creative director
Eidos

Jamil Moledina
Outreach director
EA Partners

Mark Rein
Vice president / co-founder
Epic Games

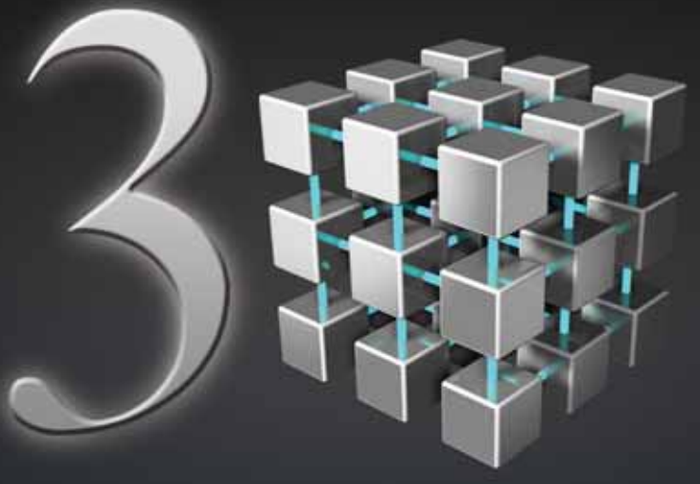
Who should attend?

Heads of studio
Owner-managers
Acquisition professionals

Register by 15 May to save 15% off your conference ticket.

GAMEHORIZON
CONFERENCE

The gaming industry doesn't have to be a puzzle



30 years experience in business development solutions for:

Developers Publishers Service Providers Brand Owners

FOG STUDIOS

www.fogstudios.com

Life Sentence

It's been almost five years since EA_spouse first cast the games industry's working practices into the spotlight, but how have things changed since then? **Ed Fear** takes a look at the issue…

We know, we know. No game developer's desk is ever this clean.

Almost every person reading these words won't need much of an introduction to the working woes of today's game developer. Making a game takes a hell of a lot of time, money, and hard work - more so than ever before.

The spotlight has been thrown on the quality of life debate more so in the past few years than ever before, thanks in part to the passionate plea of ea_spouse and her detailed description of the damage crunch can cause.

The other factor in the industry's recent push for a more sustainable working environment comes from the fact that everyone's growing up - or, more appropriately, growing older. The people who were once happy to work through the night on two or three day benders are those who now have wives and kids that they want to get home and see. Suddenly, priorities change: life isn't just about work any more.

And yet, for all of the belief that things are changing, it still seems that many are unhappy with their work situation, as demonstrated by the recent furore surrounding the IGDA, and specifically the comments from Epic's Michael Capps on how the company expects people to work 60 hour weeks.

> ***"The people who were once happy to work through the night are those who have kids that they want to see. Suddenly life isn't just about work anymore."***

Those comments have been sadly misinterpreted – while Epic does expect staff to work longer hours, it makes that expectation clear from the outset and awards its staff with bonuses that exceed their base salary – but the fact that it caused such outrage is testament to the fact that the problem is far from solved.

So, in order to see how the situation has improved in the past few years – and, indeed, quite how far it still has to go – we launched our online Quality of Life in 2009 survey. And you answered in your droves.

Over the next four pages we present our findings to you. Pages 32 and 33 contain the full breakdown of all the figures, alongside some comparisons drawn between publisher-owned and independent studios, as well as those studios in the North of the UK compared with the South.

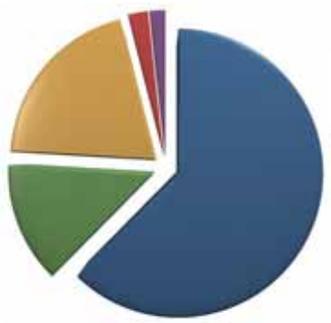
Then, on pages 34 and 35, we present a mere fraction of the personal stories and opinions that we received alongside the survey. We've tried our best to select a fair representation of both sides of the argument.

Be sure to check out the *Develop* website for even more stats, figures and analysis.

The **Stats**

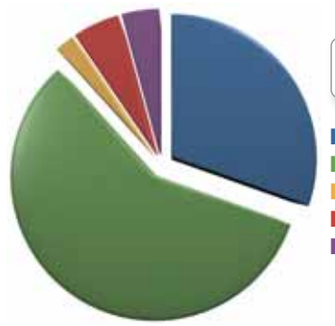
358 people answered our survey, and this is what they said…

Respondent Breakdown



Where do you work?

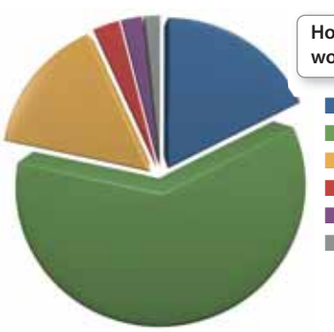
- UK: 62.4%
- Europe: 13.5%
- North America: 19.9%
- Asia: 2.2%
- Australia & NZ: 1.7%



What kind of company do you work for?

- Studio (publisher-owned): 30.4%
- Studio (independent): 57.8%
- Outsource company: 2.2%
- Self-employed (contractor): 5.3%
- Other (please specify): 4.2%

Hours worked



How many hours do you work per week, on average?

- Less than 40: 17.6%
- 40 to 50: 60.9%
- 50 to 60: 14.8%
- 60 to 70: 2.8%
- 70 to 80: 2.2%
- Over 80: 1.7%

During 'crunch', how many extra hours a week do you work, on average?

- I do not work crunch: 13.4%
- 1 to 5 hours: 8.9%
- 5 to 10 hours: 18.4%
- 10 to 15 hours: 20.7%
- 15 to 20 hours: 18.4%
- 20 to 25 hours: 8.4%
- 25 to 30 hours: 5.3%
- Over 30 hours: 6.4%

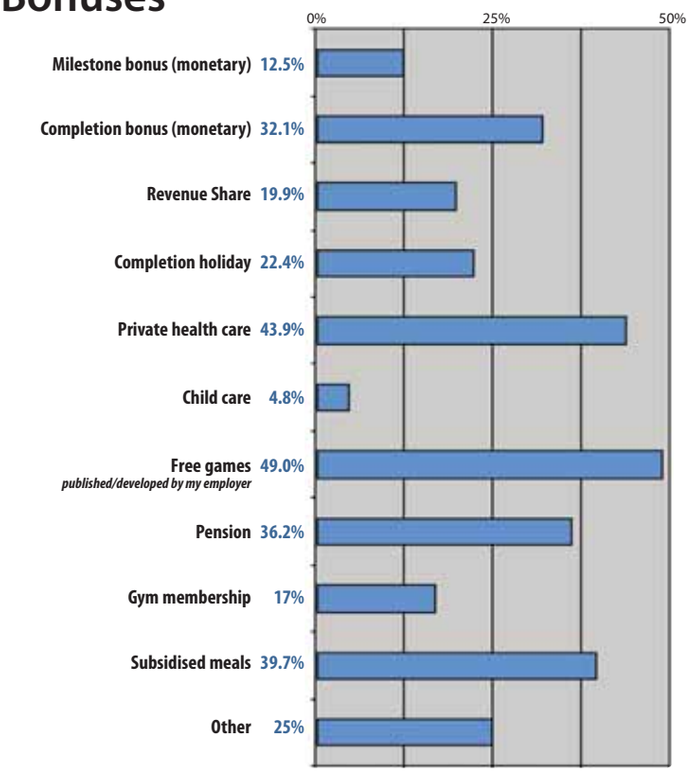
Respondent opinions

Key: Most popular answer | Second most popular answer

We asked those taking the survey to give their opinions on the following statements…

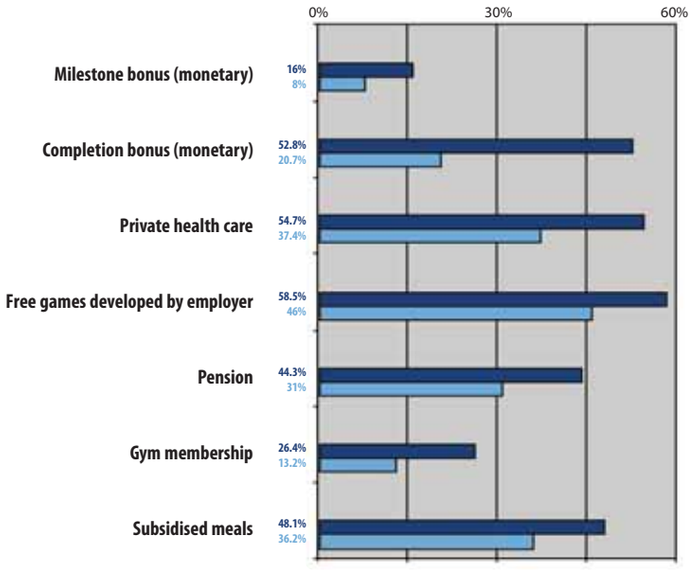
	Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion either way	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
I feel that I work too much	27.5%	32.0%	21.3%	12.4%	6.7%
I feel adequately compensated for my work and skillset	14.9%	25.3%	14.0%	27.2%	18.5%
I feel that my projects are well-scheduled	7.1%	17.6%	9.6%	33.4%	32.3%
I feel that crunch is caused by unreasonable or unrealistic expectations	49.6%	32.4%	4.8%	8.7%	4.5%
I feel the crunch culture of games development is necessary to produce good games	3.1%	12.9%	6.4%	24.9%	52.7%
I don't feel comfortable talking to my colleagues, managers or contemporaries about crunch	9.0%	21.3%	18.2%	25.8%	25.8%
I feel that crunch has impacted my health	30.3%	36.1%	14.8%	10.4%	8.4%
I feel that my company has a good attitude to Human Resources and keeping its staff happy	12.9%	27.0%	18.8%	25.0%	16.3%
I believe that trade body organisations have a duty to monitor and restrict over-working of employees	40.2%	33.0%	16.5%	5.3%	5.0%
I feel that the industry has improved its attitude to quality of life in the past five years	9.5%	33.5%	23.7%	19.8%	13.4%

Bonuses



It's encouraging that over 40 per cent of respondents receive private health care, and over 35 per cent get pension contributions. Although game development may be guilty of eating employees' time, the perks received are very possibly beyond many other 'regular' jobs. Many of the Other answers regarded regular or irregular monetary bonuses, although the frequency and amount of these ranged. Some mentioned that bonuses had been frozen this year due to the worsening economy. Many also stated that they received time off in lieu, but whether this matched overtime worked or was only a small percentage varied.

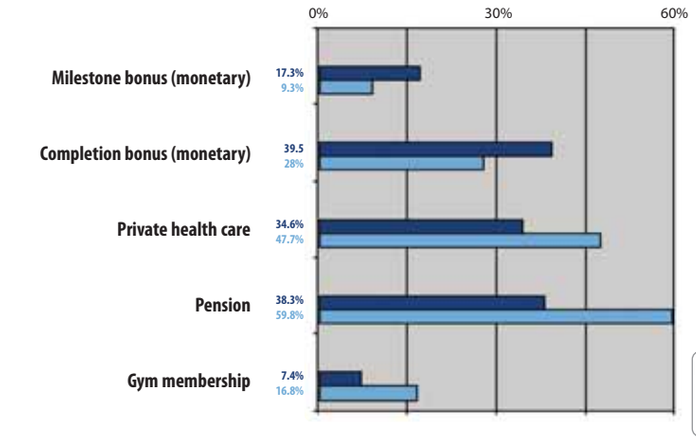
Publisher-owned vs Independent



It's interesting to see the difference here, especially as publisher-owned studios sometimes get a bad rap. The hours worked were roughly the same, too, although five per cent more staff at indies worked less than 40 hours, and almost 15 per cent didn't crunch at all, compared to 8.6 per cent for publisher-owned studios. The mode crunch hours worked was lower for publisher-owned, though, at five to ten hours (cf. ten to 15 hours for indies)

Key:
- Publisher-owned
- Independent

UK: North Vs South



Our results show that staff in the North get more monetary bonuses, whereas people in the South get more peripheral bonuses. Also worth mentioning is that southerners are much happier to talk about crunch (53.7 per cent vs. 38.5) – guess we are really softies after all. The North was more in favour of regulation by trade bodies, though.

Key:
- North
- South

Stats

98%

of those surveyed do not get official overtime pay

17%

of respondents receive no benefits whatsoever

46h

is the average, non-crunch working week according to our results

Points Of **View**

Our survey gave you the chance to have your say on the quality of life in game development. And to say we were surprised with what came out is an understatement. Here's our pick of the best (and, indeed, worst) comments…

"Crunch seems to just be accepted as 'the norm in creative industries' – this attitude will only prolong the myth that it aids productivity, when in fact all it does is crucify morale."

"Until we have fundamental changes throughout the industry – from prices to the publisher/developer relationship – the only way to make quality games is to crunch. I don't like it, but fundamentally I'm in the entertainment business, and a bit of pain is the norm in these

"I am not against working extra time and do so every week. What I hate is that for two weeks during crunch time I never get to see my wife or kids."

"The rank and file employees are also partially accountable on the crunch culture, because we agreed on the task and schedules and did not deliver it on time. It's not only management's fault that crunch happens."

"I am a manager and partially responsible for a hideous release and crunch period. I have personally made it my mission to do it better, and have spent the last two months studying different project management methodologies, practices and frameworks non-stop. My first child is due in five weeks: I have to do this better, I have no choice."

"It's a talented employee's responsibility to leave an over-crunched studio. Let the good studios get the good employees, and let the poorly managed studios be staffed with the untalented."

"In 1995, when the phone rang, we answered by saying 'Adeline 24/24, allo?' because there was always somebody at work, even during nights and weekends. The more years pass, the less crunch I have to do, the better the salary, the better the conditions, the better the bonuses. In ten years from now it should be good!"

"I am currently looking to leave the games industry, where I have worked as a programmer for seven years. The excessive overtime and minimal recognition is damaging my health, my sanity and my marriage."

"Both myself and friends have been forced to work a ridiculous amount of overtime, causing depression and bad physical health from lack of exercise and poor diet. Companies that do impose a lengthy and demanding crunch period need to be monitored and made accountable by an industry body. This is important not only for employees, but for the credibility of our industry as a whole."

"QA get the worst of it: we are always in the office and always undervalued."

"Outsource companies are treated as 'hired guns' or 'slaves'. They are *always* brought onto projects too late."

"Stress and crunch have caused me to take several months off work in order to recover. There was no help from the company in question. I'll never let it happen again, and I won't let any person that's working under me go through it, either. Utterly unproductive."

"All of my previous employers had a terrible crunch policy. I now work at a mid-sized company with paid overtime, so I find it hard to understand why some of my colleagues complain about crunch. I point out that if they had worked for any one of my previous employers they'd be greatful!"

"Our game was in constant crunch for three years, and it affected everyone who worked on it."

"We need an actual union for developers, not just something for companies to join. I need something whose members are actually looking out for each other not just banding together against key external issues."

"Everyone is always aware why crunch is needed. No one wants to do it by choice, but in a milestone-orientated environment this is inevitable. It's no different to film and TV, where creativity is integral to the product and boundaries are pushed. Especially now when we have a recession and so many small teams are the brink of collapse."

"When you have to have one night a week called 'family night', just so your wife and kids can see you once in a while, then something is broken. It is the responsibility of everyone – production, management, owners and publishers – to make corrections and increase the quality of life. Our jobs are a part of our lives, they should not be treated as our entire life."

"I think crunch is totally optional, but employees should not be fired because they don't want to crunch to stay healthy. If legislation needs to be enacted to prevent that, then so be it."

"Things are getting better, but sometimes those that cause the crunch-causing mismanagement are not held to account. This is the real problem."

"My employer has done a great deal of publicity lately about what a great company and place to work it is and the benefits it offers. Media outlets including *Develop* have reported on these initiatives, overlooking issues as to why overtime is necessary in the first place. Benefits are being provided to gloss over the large number of bad practices that continue to occur in the company and with the management strategy."

LOBBYING DEADLINE MAY 13TH

contact: michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

dev

INDUSTRY EXCE

Categories

CREATIVITY
- Best New IP
- Best Use of a Licence or IP
- Visual Arts
- Audio Accomplishment
- Publishing Hero

TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES
- Technical Innovation
- Best Tools Provider
- Creative Outsourcing Services
- Recruitment Company

STUDIOS
- Best New Studio
- Business Development
- Best Handheld Games Studio
- Best Independent Developer
- Best In-house Developer

SPECIAL RECOGNITION
- Development Legend
- Grand Prix

partnertrans.
localisation solutions for the entertainment industry

■ EXCLUSIVE DRINKS RECEPTION PARTNER

elop

LLENCE AWARDS

Wednesday July 15th, 2009

■ **Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton, UK**

For tickets, table sales and sponsorship opportunities contact
Jodie.Holdway@bhpr.co.uk • (0)1462 456 780

Sing When You're Winning

A cornerstone of the demographic explosion in video games, SingStar is five years old this month. What better time to take a look at why the series is stronger than ever. **Will Freeman** sat down with three of the developers in charge of the franchise at Sony's London Studio…

The SingStar lead trio, from left to right: executive producer Dave Ranyard, London Studio development director Mike Haigh and principle designer Kevin Mason

In just five years, SingStar has spawned countless discs, a huge online following – and, most importantly, helped attract new audiences to games

Karaoke games are hardly a new concept, and date back to the NES, but until the team behind *EyeToy* created *SingStar*, the entire genre had remained little more than a curious novelty.

Back then, in May 2004, Sony published the first *SingStar* title to a less than rapturous reception. Despite the slow start the brand and its reputation rapidly gained momentum, and quickly the series became a champion of PlayStation 2 sales. While many felt *Okami* would be the console's swansong, it seems in reality that the PS2 has plenty of voice left as a bastion of post-pub gaming.

THE PERFECT OPENER

In-house developer SCE London Studio actually began work on a prototype of *SingStar* around March 2001, after seeing an internal tech-demo at Sony that let users sing along and see if they were in key.

"I saw that demo, and I went away and thought about it," reveals London Studio principle designer Kevin Mason. "Then I played *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* with my nan, on the PlayStation 1. She had real problems with the controller, even though it's just up, down, left, right and select. She used to ask me to take control of the game and answer for her.

"So I got to thinking about a game that my nan would play, whilst also thinking about this technology that I'd seen, and came up with a really weird idea for a karaoke game that featured singing animals."

That game was called 'Singalong Safari', and was inspired by the surreal excess of light-gun title *Point Blank*. "It was to a certain extent wonderfully naïve," admits Mason. "But if we hadn't made that game we wouldn't be sitting talking about *SingStar* being a success now. It would have died on its arse really."

The team at London Studio seems to look back at the early history of *SingStar* with jovial self-deprecation, but in reality the opening chapter of the series' development continues to define its success.

"There were a lot of key good decisions at the beginning of the title's development, which meant that it got out there and then got popular," explains London Studio executive producer Dave Ranyard.

Add to that a number of factors intersected one another at the right time, and the developer was in a prime position to harness a new market. Having just worked on the then-popular *EyeToy* series, London Studio had formed a number of relationships with hardware manufactures, and was feeling 'very confident' about developing accessories. Meanwhile, the public were rediscovering a love for performance as programs like *Pop Idol* continued to dominate television schedules, and Sony had a keen eye on consumer trends.

> ***"The first version was called 'Singalong Safari'. It was wonderfully naïve – if we had released it would have died on its arse."***
>
> Kevin Mason, London Studio

CHECK ONE, CHECK TWO

"I think the key thing was when we introduced recognition for two microphones," says Mason. "That was a really important part of it, as it became a social game. We found very early on that using one mic made the game very daunting for people."

"Getting the microphones within the cost of the software was essential, as was using original artists," adds Ranyard. "And of course the PS2 was at the right point in its life cycle too. There were lots of them out there, and we could sell product to people other than the person who had originally bought the console. The brother or sister or mum were a fantastic opportunity for us."

With 70 million PS2s sold at the time, and with *SingStar* bundled with two microphones for the price of a normal game, London Studio had everything needed to make the brand a huge success, but getting songs onto disk meant the team had to tackle a number of issues beyond building the game's core technology.

"What was truly a challenge was the business side," admits London Studio development director Mike Haigh. "Just talking to the music industry and letting them know we're planning on taking *SingStar* online and letting people make videos to their music was a real challenge. The content in *SingStar* is owned by other people, so convincing them we will treat their property with reverence, and won't mess about with it: that was a challenge. Of course, being with Sony gave a great deal of credibility to us in those early meetings."

Then there's the process of selecting and preparing the tracks, which can mean overcoming a number of obstacles such as re-

The PS3 version of SingStar has introduced an online store and community functions for uploading videos of player performances

editing adult content from videos, before using the internally developed tech to implement chosen songs into the gameplay system.

"We were really very privileged because we're a first party developer working for PlayStation, which means we've got close ties with the hardware group and the service groups, and in the US and Japan. So we have a lot of opportunities other people might not necessarily have," adds Haigh.

FORGING FRIENDSHIPS

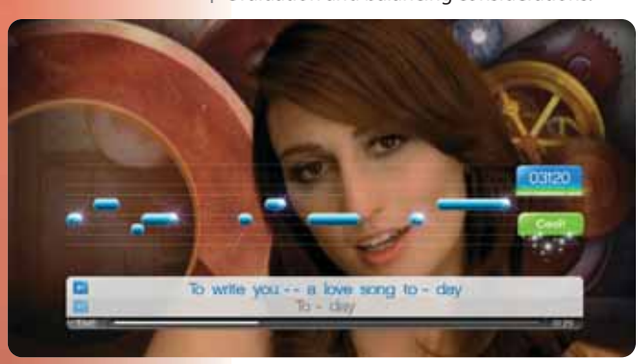
One of those opportunities is working with Sony Creative Software, which creates specially tailored Virtual Studio Technology plug-ins for its Sound Forge professional audio editing suite, which are used by the *SingStar* team on the PlayStation 3 iterations of the series. Adapted to run natively on the consoles, the VST plug-ins are optimised for the SPU media processors.

Additionally, *SingStar* 's vocal signal chain includes a high pass filter, wave hammer compressor and Sound Forge's reverb set with a 1.2 second decay. The game also makes use of ADRes technology, designed by Dr Dan Barry of the Dublin Institute of Technology, which allows for the isolation of instruments in a stereo mix. While much of the information on ADres is confidential, it has been revealed that the technology filters frequencies and works on stereo width and position.

Beyond core tech, choosing the songs is in itself a complex process and having a London Studio email address can mean you get a great deal of requests for inclusions from a range of sources including the all-important *SingStar* community, which developed as a result of the series' move to the PlayStation 3 and subsequent reinvention as an online entertainment experience.

"In terms of getting the music onto disks, we get lots of wish lists from people, internally, across the globe and from the *SingStar* users," explains Mason. "So we do get lots and lots of wish lists. We have to evaluate them in terms of suitability, not just in terms of how fun they are, but for things like long instrumentals that ruin the experience, suitable videos in terms of age rating and a number of other considerations.

"If it's all OK then we have to request it from licensing, and then we're into putting it onto disk and making our list, checking if tracks are balanced in terms of a good mix of male and female lead tracks, and then tweaking the difficulty, along with other evaluation and balancing considerations."



COMMUNITY CENTRED

That entire process is one increasingly dominated by both the input of the community and observing user behaviour. This has turned *SingStar* into something that is in some respects always in production thanks to its regular updates.

"From a development point of view, having that close relationship with the community is very beneficial to us as we can see people doing things," admits Haigh. "An example is that there's one editing function for making user-generated content, and that's just the pause button. Just with that people have made some amazing videos, and not just one person, but lots of people. That's emergent behaviour from the community.

> ***"You can't plan for emergence. You have to listen to your community, and put tools in place so you can easily listen to them."***
>
> Mike Haigh, London Studio

"I think the key word there is emergence. You can't plan emergence – you have to listen to your community, and put tools in place so you can easily listen, so that there's no barriers or other influence from external forces. Watching how people use video and the pause button gives us good indication as to what to do next, and that's a hint at what we might be doing in the future."

Confident that they will be making *SingStar* games in another five years, the team continues to add to what has become its leading brand with continual updates including the long-awaited wireless mics. Innovations in hardware are at the core of the studio's success, and that is largely thanks to a self-sufficient development model Haigh has proactively encouraged.

THE EYETOY OF THE BEHOLDER

"I've established a studio here that is set up on shared tech that is itself based on mature *EyeToy* code. SingStar uses the foundation of *EyeToy*," reveals Haigh. "Everything that is built around *SingStar* or around *EyeToy* product is wrapped back into that technology so everything here benefits from it."

Those benefits are clear, and five years after launch London Studio is bustling with activity, pumping out a steady supply of boxed product and continually updating its online offering. *SingStar* is without doubt a household name, and thanks to a design ethic firmly rooted in awareness of popular culture and consumer trends, things look set to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

UNDER THE WIRE

As a hardware-driven product, the release of wireless microphones was an essential step forward for *SingStar* as it embraced the PlayStation 3, but some felt the recently released accessory was a little too long coming.

Truth is, London Studio had in fact opted to not rush out the wireless microphones, as it had always attributed much of the success of the original incarnations of the *SingStar* concept to the affordability of the wired accessories.

"We really did have to try and work out the best route to entry and price-wise things were something of an issue. Also, we worked for a long time on quality," explains Haigh who, along with his team, invested a huge effort in trying to make Bluetooth a viable solution for freeing *SingStar* fans from the tether to their performance that the wires had become.

Citing latency issues as part of the reason for abandoning Bluetooth, Haigh reveals: "The final motivation for our choice was to get rid of the cost of the receiver, as that's actually the most expensive component. You wouldn't know it but there's a lot of chip technology in there to convert analogue to digital."

TOP OF THE BOX

Despite the fact that *SingStar* long ago introduced an online element where players can buy new tracks and join an active community, London Studio has continued to bring out a number of boxed products at a fairly rapid rate.

At a time when downloadable content appears to be mounting an unstoppable assault on high street retail, the *SingStar* franchise is still committed to physical product, and not just because players can't purchase the mics without a trip to the shops.

"From a consumer point of view, we want to appeal to people who haven't seen this product as well as the people who have already got," says Haigh. "If you're just online you're not going to have the opportunity to do that. You need to have presence at retail.

"We rely on the shop front to sell our wares. We want to keep supporting the people who are attached to it through the online bit, and we don't want to spend money where it's not necessary, obviously, but certainly, as far as the boxed product is concerned, that's the thing that people who have never seen *SingStar* before usually see first."

opm recruitment on target

HELP
RESTART
SCORE: 14500

OPM Response Ltd
+44(0)1206 21 44 21
www.opmjobs.com

FLUFFY LOGIC

exciting digital media company in central bristol are looking for a full time games programmer.

c++ and games development experience are essential. working knowledge of psp advantageous. salary negotiable.

send cv to: fred @fluffylogic.net

centroid
MOTION CAPTURE

The Power of Movement Online

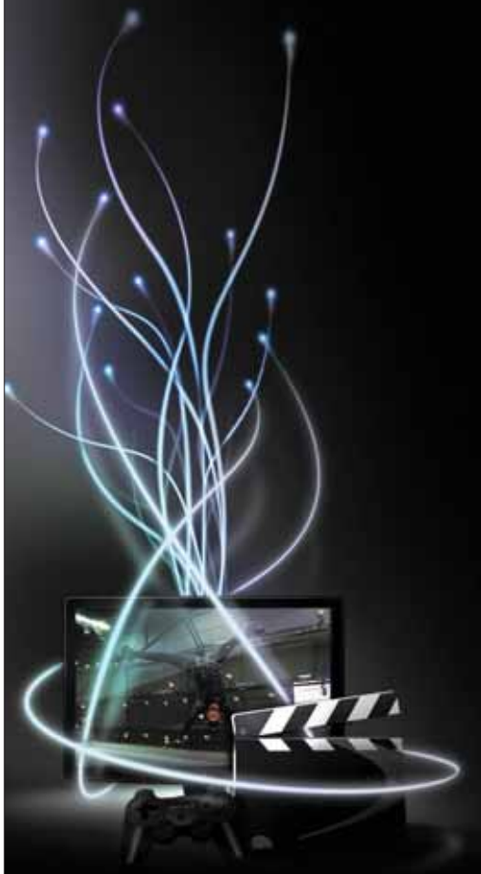
Celebrating twelve years of providing motion capture services of the highest quality to the film, television and gaming industries, Centroid is proud to announce the launch of an all new online presence in the guise of two industry-leading websites...

www.centroid3d.com

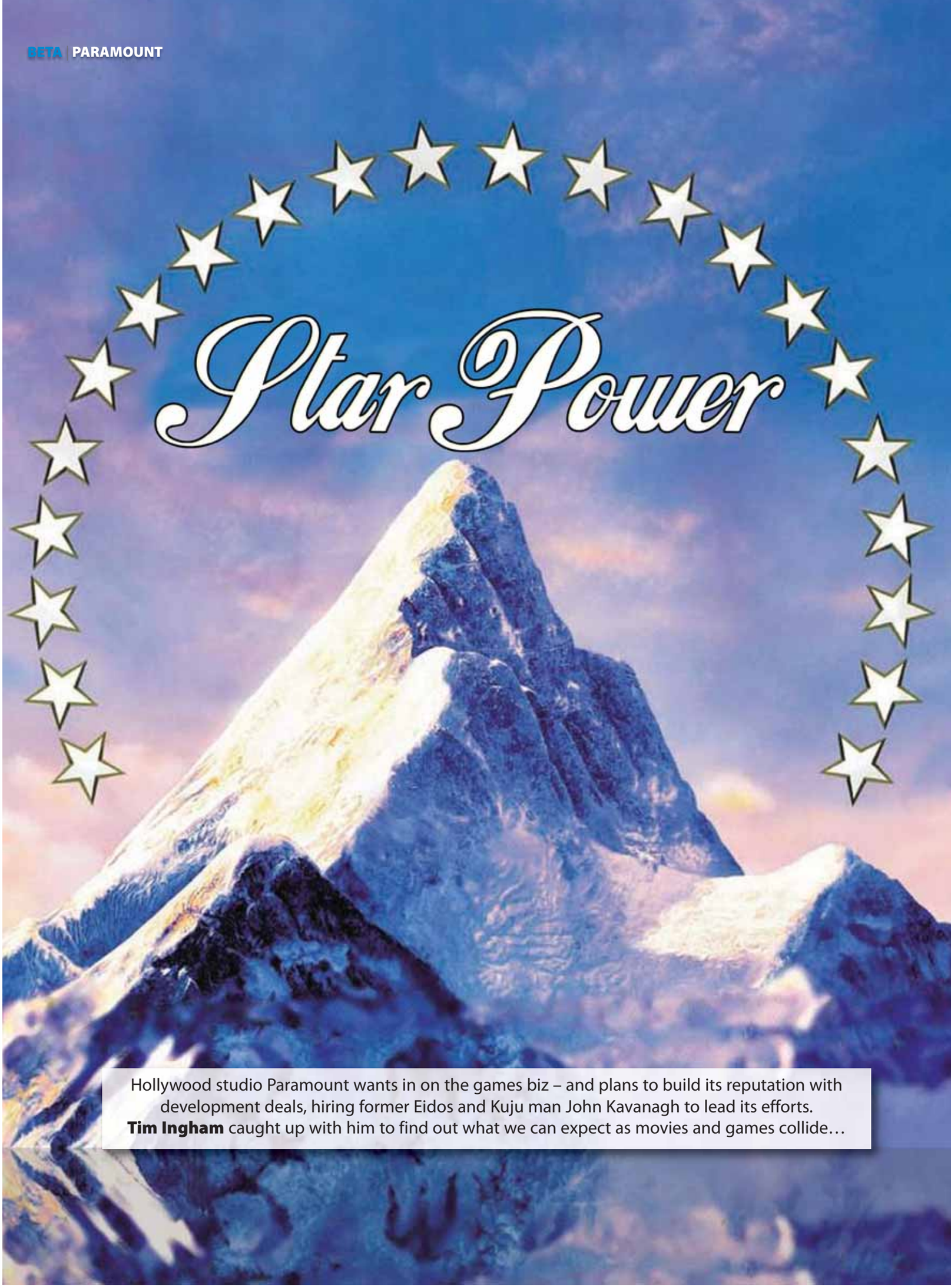
Our new corporate website provides information and an extensive creative portfolio complete with high-quality showreels and visuals from many of our projects spanning blockbuster movies, award winning television commercials and chart topping game titles.

www.centroidonline.com

Centroid online provides a mocap data processing solution to the world, shoot it in a studio of your choice and process it online, on time and at an unbeatable price. Also introducing a world class library of copyright free mocap moves for purchase as a download.



www.centroid3d.com



Hollywood studio Paramount wants in on the games biz – and plans to build its reputation with development deals, hiring former Eidos and Kuju man John Kavanagh to lead its efforts. **Tim Ingham** caught up with him to find out what we can expect as movies and games collide…

What's the story behind Paramount's move into games and your appointment?
We started with iPhone publishing, and we've had five iPhone games out now. They're all legacy titles, like *Days Of Thunder* and *Top Gun*. *Days Of Thunder* and *Shooter* did really well, so well in fact that we're exploring other platforms. We're also eager to launch our new *Top Gun* game in early May. Our next step is into XBLA and PSN. We've done a game based on the new *Star Trek* movie for both of those and we're taking our legacy titles onto XBLA and PSN as well, including a remake of *The Warriors*.

What's the thinking behind releasing the Star Trek game as download only? Why not go the traditional route of getting a co-publisher on board?
We're not doing any retail at this point as a standalone publisher. We're only going with digital distribution at this point.

As we're all seeing, downloadable is playing an increasingly important role in the industry. Downloading movies and interactive content fits well with Paramount's strategy. That's what our group's focused on. We will continue to work with out licensing partners on boxed product.

You're not alone in releasing a download-only major movie tie-in – Warner did so earlier in 2009 with Watchmen. Is this a trend you can see growing?
Yes. I think establishing our presence in that market early on is very key because it gets hard after a while to find your products in online. We have to set expectations early. Placing game downloads to go with our movies is good, because being able to associate a download with a movie marketing campaign is a very good thing for us.

Do you have any retail strategy going forward?
We're also looking at DSiWare and PSP's download service, but you won't be seeing Paramount's name alone on a box at any time soon. We recently developed some female-skewing casual games based on our licences including *Mean Girls*, *Pretty In Pink* and *Clueless*, which were distributed by 505 Games in Europe. Boxed products require sophisticated sales infrastructure especially with complexities surrounding inventory and more – that we don't currently have. My hat goes off to anyone that follows this path, but it's not something we're actively pursuing at the moment.

Will we see boxed products with the Paramount logo on in the future?
I couldn't say because that would be a very big corporate decision to put that kind of infrastructure in place. In our current form as PDI, I would envisage us relying on partnerships with third parties. If you look as far ahead as to when that would be discussed, you're looking at the next generation of consoles. Then we start discussing things that haven't even happened yet – the platform holders' strategy for their next hardware, for one thing. As we've seen with OnLive technology – which my old friend Mike McGarvey is involved in – things can change pretty fast. I've seen that working – and it seems to run pretty well. But it's a prime example of deal changers that make any predictions in this business difficult. They're rolling out fibre-optic cables into homes now – that could also have a huge effect. You have to ask: how will these things affect the creation of the new Xbox or PlayStation? How will they affect the consumer's thinking? Because of these new technologies, it's hard to make predictions.

Warner admitted that they didn't want to risk investing in retail with Watchmen – due to a feared lack of exposure. Is that something you're aware of?
The *Star Trek* game is a light experience. It was developed in conjunction with the film-makers for that purpose and was designed around tightly focused gameplay. It's going to be 800 points – around £9.99. And that's representative of the experience gamers are going to get. That isn't a retail title these days. It wouldn't be right for the consumer or in terms of return on investment.

Would you be keen on working with other third party publishers?
Where there's interest, we'll have a discussion. Our primary focus is on digital downloads, but we work with partners in two senses: one where we build the product and someone else does the sales and marketing, and one where we offer a straight licensing deal. For instance *The Godfather II* is just arriving from EA, which is a straight licensing deal.

> ***"You have to ask: how will things like fibre-optic cables connected to homes affect the creation of the new PlayStation or Xbox formats?"***

Will we see you farming out less licences than you have in the past – and more of you using your own franchises for downloadable games?
I wouldn't say that. We don't have a strict percentage or whatever, but we know our limits – building an XBLA or PSN game is much less complicated than building a triple-A title for retail. Where we think it appropriate, if it's a big franchise, we might consider doing one of those ourselves online, but we're still very keen to keep working with partnerships. Certain publishers have a level of expertise we don't have yet, so on other such titles we'll call on them. There's always a commercial decision there, too.

But on the partnership side, we're looking to be involved more and more. We're very keen to be actively involved in making quality games like *The Godfather* series, making sure the right design, the right, team, the right budget are all in place. We want to be involved in our licensed games more in the future. Our partners do a good job of generating awareness of our product and we both want top-notch products, too.

Former Eidos and Kuju man John Kavanagh is leading Paramount's global digital interactive strategy

Are you planning on expanding internationally? Will we see a UK HQ for Paramount's games division any time soon?
Not at this time. Things move very quickly, but we don't have any current plans. That's in the next 12 months or so, at least. Longer term, it might be something of interest.

You recently worked with Freeserve for Days Of Thunder – but they're a fairly little known outfit. Why did you pick them?
Freeserve are very respected studio on Mac, so it makes sense to get them in for iPhone. They've made a product we're proud of in *Days Of Thunder* and on *Top Gun*. We're working with larger developers for larger products.

Would you be working with developers that are well known names in the industry?
Yes. We're working with a bunch of guys that are recognisable names in the business – and will continue to do so. We like to pick the right developers, even for our licensed games.

Do you have an internal development resource?
All of our development, testing, and QA is external; however, we have an internal Production team that oversees all aspects of these processes.

Would you be interested in acquiring a studio or building an internal team?
We don't have any plans to build a team and we don't have any set strategy to go out and find a team to buy. We're looking at all strategic opportunities on a case-by-case basis. If there's synergy that, maybe that's something that could affect our decisions. But having managed internal development teams before, it's a lot of work. It's hard to focus on that and on publishing.

Are you interested in working with developers you haven't yet struck up a relationship with?
If I say yes here, I'm going to get ten million phone calls – but of course we are, with certain conditions. We are actively in talks with new studios all the time. We want to work with people who deliver on time and high quality product. When it's tied into an active movie, it needs to be both day and date – and high quality.

be inspired

Save up to £150
Book by 10 June

14-16 JULY 2009
develop in Brighton

The Develop Conference is an inspiring place – over 80 great sessions given by a host of international development experts, around 1200 developers getting together to share ideas, learn from each other and socialise and this year there's innovative new content with the launch of evolve.

Here's a taste of this year's programme:

Keynote Conference Keynote
David Jones, Founder, Realtime Worlds

Keynote 'The Art of LittleBigPlanet" – A Big Medley
Kareem Ettouney and Mark Healey, Co-founders, Media Molecule

Art Directing Customisable Characters for International Markets
Jimmy O'Ready, Realtime Worlds

Keynote The Runtime Studio in your Console: The Inevitable Directionality of Game Audio
Guy Whitmore, Director of Audio, Microsoft Game Studios

Guerrilla Tactics: Designing Audio for Killzone 2
Mario Lavin, Guerrilla Games

Keynote Out of the Box(ed Product): Thinking for an Online Age
Jeff Hickman, Executive Producer, Mythic Entertainment

Video Games as The Eighth Art
Denis Dyack, Silicon Knights

Keynote The Wizards of OS: I Don't Think We're in C++ Anymore
Doug Wolff, Eutechnyx

Keynote Building LEGO Worlds – online, offline, and everything in between
Jonathan Smith, Development Director, Travellers Tales

Gamesification: Turning Other Things into Games
Maurice Suckling, The Mustard Corporation

Keynote Resetting the Game
David Perry, Industry Consultant

Crossing Over in a World Gone Casual
Matt Spall, Playora

Keynote Bridging The Gap Experiences Learned with Agile Project Management across Multisite, Multicultural and Multilingual Project
Lisa Charman, Ubisoft and Patric Palm, Hansoft

How Social Networks and Emerging Platforms and Technologies Will Reshape Gaming's Oldest Genre
Struan Robertson, Gusto Games

Making Videogames History: Starting the National Videogames Archive
Iain Simons, National Videogame Archive

Games, Designs and Lessons Learned at the Global Game Jam
Gorm Lai, Glc02

Other speakers confirmed include:

Autodesk • Bizarre Creations • Blitz Games • Climax • Creative Assembly • comScore • Crytek • Denki • Disney Black Rock Studios • Fishlabs • FluffyLogic • Glu Mobile • Google • ICO Partners • Kerb • Lightning Fish Games • Lionhead • Matmi • MySpace • Nokia • Mediatonic • Microsoft • Playfish • Rare • Team 17 • Zoe Mode

Make sure you stay ahead of the game – come to Develop in Brighton!

www.developconference.com

Mobile Sponsor: n-gage by Nokia
International Media Sponsor: develop
Media Sponsor: casualgaming.biz
Media Sponsor: ME
Media Sponsor: AUDIO MEDIA
Media Sponsor: music4games
Media Sponsor: IMAGINE
Media Sponsor: gamesindustry.biz
Member Discounts: Tiga, igda
Organised by: tandem events

BUILD

THE LATEST TOOLS NEWS, TECH UPDATES & TUTORIALS

"Mixing for games is way too stuck in a literal distance-based approach."
Heard About, p50

TOOLS: A show of Unity
p46

GUIDE: AI middleware
p48

KEY RELEASE: Substance Air
p49

Batman Returns

The Caped Crusader is back for his third outing on UE3, p52

HEARD ABOUT: DEVELOP CONFERENCE AUDIO TRACK > P50

Physical exercises

ONE OF THE VERY first things that I did after joining *Develop* was to go and interview Michael Steele, then VP of marketing for Ageia. Its PhysX physics processing units had been out for about a year, but was failing to make the impact that they perhaps deserved. "The proof is in the pudding," he said at the time. "We need to show games with the PPU making a real difference."

That was in July 2007, and just seven months later Ageia was gobbled up by an unusually hungry Nvidia. The belief at the time was that, while the idea of offloading physics calculations to a seperate chip was a great idea, the actual impetus for people to go out and buy a card was almost non-existant, outside of early adopters (but they'd probably buy a toaster if it was shoehorned into a PCI-E card, although that's probably not helpful in terms of heat dissipation).

So, by piggybacking Nvidia's new general-purpose GPU usage push, physics could still be thrown off the CPU but without a discrete card. Of course, it raised the question about whether anyone would want to take cycles away from the GPU's graphical activities, but those were countered with the fact that you could buy two graphics cards – taking us back to the original problem.

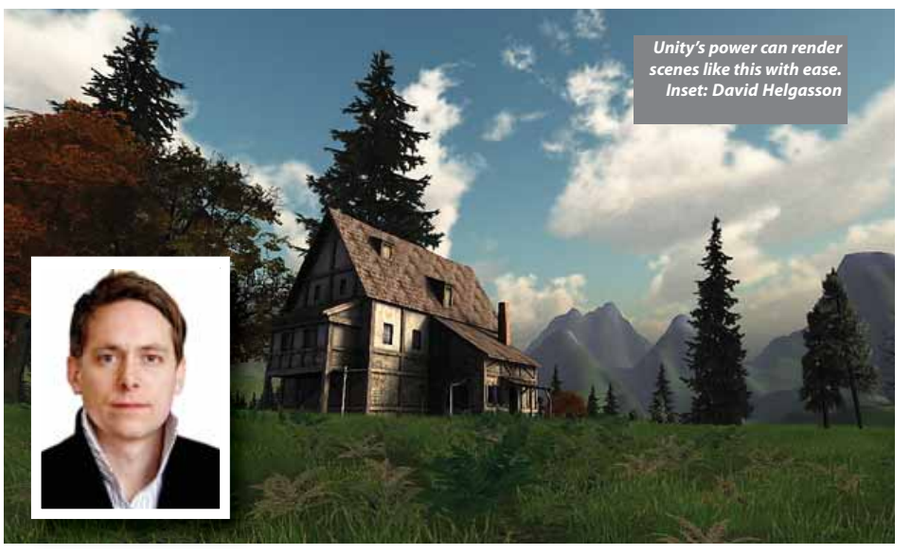
And yet, going on the frequent press releases tumbling into my inbox, PhysX seems to be really picking up some steam. Is it because of the hardware-acceleration? No. The problem that Steele admitted at the beginning – no key games – still hasn't been solved. Rather, it's the efforts to proliferate the SDK (itself based on Ageia's acquisition of physics middleware firm NovodeX) by releasing a free PC version and integration into the PS3 SDK. GPU piggybacking might become a driver of growth in the future, but as for now, the PPU dream remains unachieved.

Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

< CODING >

Industry United

One of the big new players on the middleware scene, Unity's rise to a popular engine is set to skyrocket with the new Windows version. **Ed Fear** sat down with CEO and co-founder David Helgasson, co-founder Nicholas Francis and evangelist Tom Higgins to see what the company's learnt as it enters the big leagues…



Unity's power can render scenes like this with ease. Inset: David Helgasson

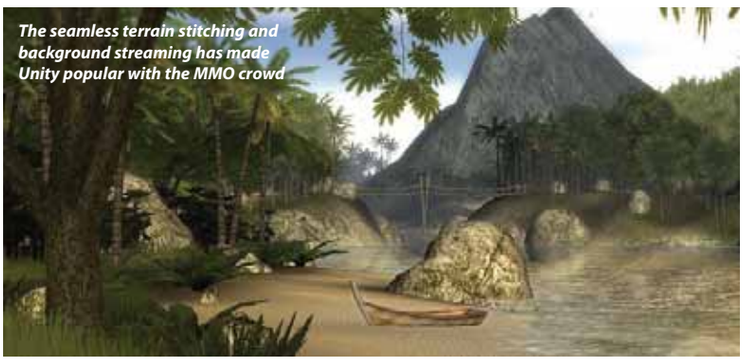
How do you think being on Windows will change things for you?
David Helgasson: Well, for one, we're going to see our sales numbers go up *[laughs]*. What the Windows version will really do for us is remove the friction of testing and trialing, and thus convincing users. If you had a serious budget and you wanted to use Unity because you wanted the workflow or features, you'd have to get a Mac. But that's friction, you know – CTOs were trialling it out on their wives' Macs. It's stupid friction.

Why did you originally start on Macs?
DH: Primarily historical reasons. But it's had its benefits – we've been able to mature with a close-knit group of developers that weren't shouting too loud. And, of course, using Macs to develop has helped with the form factor – the interface of a Mac is so polished that we have to do the same. We've spent so much time removing options and simplifying the interface – it's still as powerful, but making it easier to use was important. But we've known for a long time that we had to come to Windows.
Nicholas Francis: Originally we were just a bedroom game maker, and we just had Macs – so that's what we developed on and for. But yeah, we knew Windows had to be done. We've been working on it for about two years now – there was a large codebase that we had to throw out and re-write.

Your userbase was quite vocal against a Windows version – how have they reacted now it's launched?
DH: We really don't think it's going to be a problem. I mean, it's too early to say, but I think what made the community so nice is that it's really interested people, really creative people – you know, they're not idiots. Similarly, Unity isn't expensive but it isn't cheap either – there's the minimum commitment of $200, so the forums have been great so far. I don't see that changing.
NF: It was the vocal minority that opposed to a Windows version coming, really. I think it was partly resentment about the fact that they'd had to buy a Mac back in the day, but that people don't have to now.

Unity's pricing is unique, in that it's more than something like Torque but less than the big guys. How do you categorise your audience yourselves?
DH: Essentially, we want to provide professional software, like Maya or Photoshop, but we also want to provide that to a very wide range of people. It's being used by big, hardcore teams – Cartoon Network just launched their MMO *FusionFall*, for example, and there's lots of really cool stuff in the pipeline – but also lots of smaller studios are working with it too.

People who have been in the industry ten or 20 years are picking it up and thinking it's the bee's knees and start using it for their projects. And then it goes all the way down to hobbyists, students, and even visual professionals who'd otherwise be messing around with something like Flash. And, you know, having this breadth is our mission, it's what we want to do – it's important to do it, because you then get this great community of people with different skillsets, all cooperating and helping each other



The seamless terrain stitching and background streaming has made Unity popular with the MMO crowd

out. If you just stick with the indie audience – you know, like GarageGames – I think you can paint yourself into a corner and get stuck with it. It has to be really good, it has to be viable for high-end professional development.

Do you think that model will serve you well given the belt-tightening that's going on at the moment?
DH: Yeah, definitely. It's low cost to enter into, you don't have call anyone and beg for a price – you can just use your credit card on the website. You can start with one or two people and then grow as you go from prototype to full production.

Also, the focus of Unity is saving you time; it's been that way for years: the automisation of importing, script recompiling on the fly, the live preview on iPhone; they're all examples of that. It's zero-second interaction and iteration, even when you're working for an external platform. It's incredibly time-saving, and it's not just about cost – it helps you make better stuff.
NF: And, of course, people are getting laid off all the time, and a number of them are starting new studios. That's great business for us. So I guess our pricing model is really good, because whenever anything shakes the industry, we're like this big net that catches it all.

How has demand been for the iPhone version of Unity?
Tom Higgins: The adoption in the first week or two afterwards was just unbelievable. What was exciting about it was that a lot of the people coming on board were new users. Our basic licence – the indie licence – was just coming in droves, so that was a lot of new attention on us, in addition to all of our existing users who were taking games they already had and re-purposing them for iPhone.

> ***"It's zero-second interaction and iteration, even when you're working for an external platform. It's incredibly time-saving."***

DH: And now there's about one new iPhone game on the App Store every day that uses Unity, and over 100 in total. One of them – *Zombieville USA* – is the number two paid App. It's this pretty simple 2D game with some 3D tricks. Of course, it could have been done with Xcode, but the rapid way of being able to get it up and running and then get it out there, and being able to tune it and so on.
NF: It's worth noting that a lot of the Unity games that are on the App Store are 2D games. The impression I often get is that customers are really desperate for the source code, because they think that otherwise they're going to be tied in to whatever game we've geared the engine towards. But people are making these 2D games without it.

From the start, we could never agree what games to make ourselves, so we just built an engine that could do it all. So that's a belief in game development that's slowly eroding – you don't need the source code. Large studios, yeah, they are welcome to buy it, but most people really don't need to. I think the iPhone has really showcased that.

Unity covers so many bases now: MMOs, browsers, iPhone, Wii… do you ever think that you need to stop expanding your reach?
DH: I think there's value in being in all of those spaces. People don't like limiting themselves, and if you buy into a development platform you want to be able to do all sorts of different things. There's a cost to learning a platform, even if the price you pay isn't that high. So the real scale is achieved when you have all the possibilities.

We saw that with the Wii, actually – people were really excited about it, but they were like 'well, when we start production, we know if it'll be Wii or Xbox'. That's something people want - Xbox 360 support, because Microsoft's done a really good job of promoting Xbox Live Arcade as being easy to get onto.

Now you've got big guns like EA on board – do you think they're changing their views on what constitutes a good game engine?
DH: Yeah, I think they are changing their view – they're realising that it's not just all about making more console games, more triple-A games: they need to be where the players are, and that's in the browser and on devices like the iPhone. Some people from big companies have told me that they're now happy, because they have this tool and they're in the community next to 14-year olds who're making all this money from their iPhone games. It's sort of levelling, you know.
NF: For the large-scale developers, they look at this community and think, wow, here are a lot of people we can hire. If we have problems there's this great support we can get. They want to be part of a vibrant community. Because, you know, when they use their own proprietary stuff, it makes it impossible for them to get people on board quickly. That's one of the advantages of being so open – we've democratised this, and so many people can use it, that's great for the big guys.

How have you found dealing with the big guys like EA compared to indies and hobbyists? Some would suggest the latter might be the harder ones to please.
DH: The big guys are really worried before they jump in – they want to meet us in person and so on. They think that, if it's so cheap, it's either not any good or that we'll be going away soon. You kind of have to convince them that this company is actually really successful, we don't have outside funding, we're growing, and it's actual custom that's paying our way.
TH: I think that when big companies invest in something and get the source code, they can basically take it away and they've got it. When they're investing in a tool like this, they need a little more cajoling. Whereas to the indie developers $199 is a much bigger portion of their expenses, so they tend to want not the world but something close to it.
NF: What's interesting is that we see that in big studios it's the people lower-down that pick it up, and then pushing management and saying 'this is what we should be using'. I think that's a nice way to enter – it's not management pushing it on people, they want to do it. It's a totally different way of selling into an organisation, and it's really really nice.
www.unity3d.com

GUIDE: AI MIDDLEWARE

Once upon a time, artificial intelligence was the Next Big Thing – but its potential to surprise and amaze gamers has dulled of late. **Ed Fear** takes a look at the tech that hopes to put AI back in the game…

When Havok showed *Develop* the demos for its new Havok AI product at GDC, the first question was: why?

But actually, the real interesting takeaway from our discussion with the company's MD Dave O'Meara was how they felt that the AI middleware market was still relatively untapped. Havok, really, had merely seen an opportunity for someone to stir things up, and they'd taken it.

Whether the three other companies would agree with O'Meara's assertions is most certainly debatable. Long-term and established players like Autodesk (*née* Kynogon) and PathEngine would probably rally against such claims, given that they've managed to sustain themselves for a good number of years based on the fact that no-one wants to write their own low-level pathfinding code. Which, at its core, is exactly what Havok is offering.

The real potential avenue for development is that which German firm Xaitment is exploring: AI middleware beyond just pathfinding. Naturally, the arguments against this are strong: AI is a something particularly unique to each and every game, and attempting to build a model that suits all could end up satisfying no-one. But while the coding and construction of finite state machines might not be as pressing or as irritating as pathfinding, if it helps people create more impressive AI in less time then there's certainly a chance it could work.

What should be lauded about Xaitment's approach, though, is that its efforts to wrap all elements of AI construction in easy-to-use graphical UIs could divorce design from implementation, possibly leading to the rise of a new dedicated role: the AI designer. Only when that happens will AI's potential really be unlocked.

HAVOK AI

DEVELOPER
Havok

CLIENTS
Undisclosed

PLATFORMS
Undisclosed

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
Via website

Will Havok manage to dominate the young AI middleware market as it has done physics?

www.havok.com

Detailed in last month's issue of *Develop*, Havok's move into the AI market may have caused a few furrowed brows. But, really, it makes sense: all of Havok's products deal with crunching complex gometric data, which fits in with navmesh generation, and its experience with physics means it can do dynamic pathfinding and predict the results of moving objects. Plus, of course, it ties in neatly with the company's physics, animation, behaviour and destruction tech.

KYNAPSE 6

DEVELOPER
Autodesk

CLIENTS
EA Mythic, Sega , Sony Online Entertainment

PLATFORMS
PS2, PS3, PSP, Xbox, Xbox 360, Wii, PC

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
middleware@autodesk.com

Kynapse 6's new debugger will help developers tweak their agents' behaviours

www.autodesk.com

Autodesk went big on its middleware push at GDC this year, and Kynapse played a big part. Now at version 6, the latest edition adds a remote debugger, allowing programmers and designers to examine objects at real-time, plus pause and step through the simulation and record for later playback. Dynamic pathfinding performance has been enhanced, plus hierarchical 3D pathfinding and a new flat pathfinding mode, which simplifies implementation using streamed data.

BRAINPACK

DEVELOPER
Xaitment

CLIENTS
Gas Powered Games

PLATFORMS
Xbox 360, PS3, PC, Wii

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
Via website

Xaitment is one of the few companies to attempt Ai middleware beyond pathfinding

www.xaitment.com

Xaitment's modular AI middleware offering has matured significantly over the past few years. It's now divided into five components: xaitMap for automatic navmesh generation, xaitMove for movement behaviours such as seeking and fleeing, xaitControl for hierarchical probabilistic finite state machines, xaitThink for autonomy and learning by experience and inference, and xaitKnow for authoring world descriptions. The BrainPack bundle is free until a publishing deal is signed.

PATHENGINE

DEVELOPER
PathEngine

CLIENTS
Rare, The Creative Assembly, Lionhead

PLATFORMS
PC, Xbox 360, PS3

PRICE
E4,500 – E25,000

CONTACT
generalcontact@pathengine.com

Version 5.19 adds very significant optimisations for content processing

www.pathengine.com

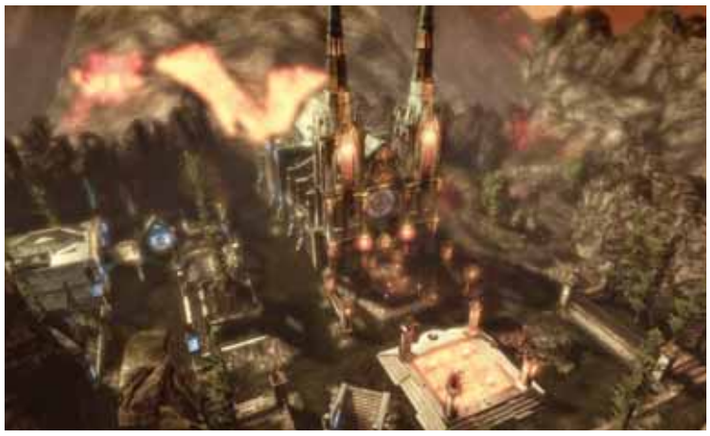
PathEngine's eponymous pathfinding middleware is so mature that the company's frequent updates largely concern optimisations and new features to help developers rather than any massive new additions. But then, when you've got a product used by heavyweight triple-A studios, you're obviously doing something right. The tech uses augmented navmeshes for ground management, static and dynamic obstacle detail, pairs pathfinding and collision and doesn't alias over long distances.

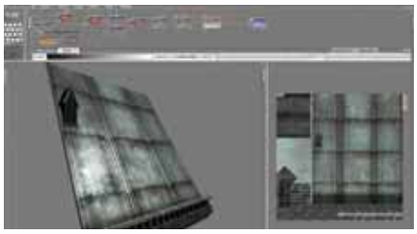
KEYRELEASE

Substance Air

While the first two versions of its ProFX procedural texturing technology didn't set the middleware world alight, the re-tooled, rebranded and refocused Substance Air is on course to tap into the growing digital download market, **Ed Fear** discovers…

PRODUCT: Texturing middleware
COMPANY: Allegorithmic
PRICE: Available on request
CONTACT: +33 (0)4 73 34 70 80
www.allegorithmic.com





Above left: This UT3 level is entirely textured with ProFX

Above top: ProFX's authoring application has been made more artist-friendly

Above: Degenerative textures are still part of the company's aims

Allegorithmic's ProFX was a brilliant idea. Take textures, and their inherent bloat and inability to scale elegantly, and make them procedural. Ta da! Small, portable textures generated on-the-fly with the might of our next-gen consoles.

While the premise was sound, the tech failed to take off in the way some expected. Where it did gain significant traction, though, is in the online market. Although it counts only a number of Western studios amongst its client base, almost all of Asia's largest MMO developers – The9, NCsoft, Gravity, Nexon – are ardent customers of the technology.

Allegorithmic's president and founder, the enigmatic Dr. Sebastien Deguy, has been at the forefront of the company's push into the East. "You know, I read the other day that there might be as many as 10,000 game studios in China," he enthuses. "Maybe only 300 of them are really active, but that's still a big market."

It's China and Korea's markets that have embraced ProFX, and for good reason. The significant barrier to revenue generation in free-to-play MMOs is the download size of the client – the bigger it is, the less likely people are going to complete the download, and therefore the less people that'll actually play the game. Being able to reduce texture footprint by up to 500x can have a significant influence on client size, especially as textures typically take up 50 per cent of any game.

Deguy gives us a case study. One of Allegorithmic's customers, Gravity, released a new ProFX-enabled version of its popular game *Ragnarok Online*, reducing the client size from 1.3Gb to 900Mb. "Just from a 25 per cent size decrease, revenues went up 38 per cent," explains Deguy.

"The model is that, out of 100 people who want to play a free MMO, 10 will actually complete the download and one of those will end up paying for items. Our goal is to increase the number of people who actually play the game."

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Realising the power (and demand) of this new market, the company went back to the drawing board, coming up with its new product – Substance Air.

"Essentially, we could have called it ProFX 3.0," says Deguy. "It's the next generation of ProFX but completely rewritten. It's more flexible, more scalable, and more focused on the core market: online gaming."

Much of the focus for the new version has been on making the workflow easier and redesigning the authoring tool's interface. Because artists are used to working in a directly visual environment, Deguy admits that there was a problem with getting them on board.

> ***"Substance Air is the next generation of ProFX but completely rewritten. It's more flexible, more scalable, more focused."***

"Artists find it hard. They found it hard to get used to ProFX, so now we have a set of training materials and videos. We also run a lot of training to get people up to speed on the product. What we've found is that after about two hours they're comfortable with it, so we know it's not a massive problem, just a problem of first steps. I think with ProFX it was the case that we only 'changed the lives' of about one per cent of people – 99 per cent said, 'Umm, no thanks'. Here now with Substance it's more than that, about 50 per cent. We're aware of the problem, because it's a real innovation, and we have to change the way people build their assets, and that means we have to help them."

Deguy is clear that, while the current focus is on the size benefits of procedural textures is at the forefront, the company hasn't abandoned its other push – using the run-time generation of textures to make them more dynamic.

"Substance Air is the first iteration of the new Substance family. So, you'll have Substance Air for online games, maybe another Substance product for retail games. But, for retail games, they're more interested in the dynamic textures because they've got all the space of a DVD, so being compact isn't such an important thing. They're more interested in making their environments more dynamic, so that when I hit a wall the impact is different depending on, say, the weapon involved, the angle of the attack and the velocity of the attack.

"We'll have something for web-based applications too – what I call the new 3D. New 3D is real-time, online, multi-platform – cellphones, browser – and also mass-market. So you'd need to have something compact for online; something dynamic to scale between the multiple platforms. But it's online gaming first. We've found a business model and a proposition of value, and we'll see what comes next."

Model behaviour

Given that ProFX had a free version called MapZone, we asked Deguy whether Substance Air will receive the same.

"MapZone will still be there, and we'll still be rolling in minor upgrades," he confirms. "But for Substance, I'm not sure about the business model yet."

The reasoning behind MapZone, he goes on to say, was to help build a community around ProFX. Given the different process required to generate procedural textures, having a community that was comfortable with the tool and could help out new users was an early goal of the company.

"We want to build a community. It's a highly complex tool, so we've spent a lot of time making it more accessible to non-technical artists. But it remains quite technical, and quite a different way of working.

"So we've been looking for smart ways to build a community so that there's this help base. The idea was that having MapZone out there free would help attract that community, but it turns out that it didn't really do a huge amount. We didn't reach that critical mass. So maybe when Substance comes out that'll help, because it's more focused towards artists.

"We'll see, but we're not sure about the different levels of pricing. We've got many ways to go – we could say it's free for non-commercial use, or maybe that you pay a fee once you've found a publisher. We're considering all possible avenues."

HEARD ABOUT

Keepin' It Real-time In Brighton

John Broomhall talks to MGS' Guy Whitmore about this year's Develop Conference audio track…

14-16 JULY 2009 develop in Brighton

Europe's top game development talent will once again gather on Brighton's seafront this July to discuss the art and business of making today and tomorrow's videogames. This year's audio track, taking place Thursday 16th July, will focus on real-time audio: the creative approach and practical techniques for manipulating audio on-the-fly according to game events and game states, exploring the increasing proliferation and use of run-time DSP plug-ins, and dynamic control of the overall mix balance in response to the player's actions and gameplay.

AUDIO IS KEY

Headlining on audio, we're delighted to be welcoming Microsoft Game Studios' director of audio, Guy Whitmore, as our keynote speaker. Based in the USA, Whitmore and his team cover the entire portfolio of MGS games for Xbox 360 and Windows, touching dozens of titles each year and engaging in everything from creative and technical consulting through to heading up and undertaking major audio and recording production projects.

"In a non-linear medium the only way that audio can really be immersed with game-play and visuals is with real-time DSP," explains Whitmore. "Short of that we can just sort of lay sound on top – there's a potential disconnect. We're moving from big, clunky, pre-baked wave files to a more componentised approach.

"Fully mixed wave files are like 2D art: you can only see one side of them. Yet we need to be able to hear a sound from all sides, at various distances, in different surroundings. In games, final mix is the output of the games console, and this fact demands that mixing and mastering of game audio be done at run-time. Essentially, take your entire music studio and sound design suite – including mixers, synths, samplers, DSP etc. – then virtualise everything, make it adequately efficient, and finally drop it all into your game environment. And there you have it – a complete run-time studio, ready with the flexibility to turn on a dime to meet the needs of the game."

Whitmore believes that fostering a healthy third-party middleware environment is vital to providing composers and sound designers with the choice and variety of tools that they enjoy in linear media. This environment, he theorises, will not only include audio engine makers, but sample libraries, DSP makers, and virtual instrument companies that already do business in the MI and audio-post worlds.

> ***"You can do amazing things with high quality DSPs and I want to push this approach."***
>
> Guy Whitmore, MGS

"You can do amazing things with high quality DSPs and I really want to push this approach," he continues.

"DSP is kind of like the shaders and particle effects of game audio. What those things do to visuals –real-time lighting changes, for example – creates believability. I think the same can be said of audio DSP techniques: sounds become part of one environment rather than disparate. And this is about subtlety as well as car engine distortion – changing filter cut-off in real-time in response to polling of game variables may be a sub-conscious effect but a vital artistic contribution to an overall wow gaming experience. Take *Fable 2*. The overall mood changes from light to dark over many hours of gameplay. You want to subtly reflect that using the same ambient sound assets, so you apply a combination of filters to make it sound darker. It's opening up a whole new toolbox for sound designers, who I think will increasingly work in the context of a game rather than out of context. It's a very big deal creatively.

"For me, mixing for games is way too stuck in a literal distance-based approach – everything getting quieter the further away it is, regardless of how important it is. We need a re-think and again, to me, DSP is a very important component, particularly when you're getting into 'I want this section to feel dreamy the second time' or 'I want the player to suddenly feel the sadness that the character's feeling'. It's the same type of emotional choices a sound designer for a movie might make, but working in a non-linear context…"

SOUND STAGE

Joining Whitmore on an impressive speaker roster are Mario Lavin, sound director for the acclaimed *Killzone 2*, Kenny Young, audio guru behind award-winning *LittleBigPlanet* and Allan Wilson, all-round orchestral recording maestro.

If you want to hear some of today's audio luminaries discuss their latest ideas, thinking and innovation, network with them, and party beside the seaside, then come on down for another fascinating day's oresentation, not to mention some high quality face-time. It's an excellent opportunity to find out what your peers are up to. We very much look forward to to seeing you – and also hearing what you have to say in the 'Open Mic' session.

www.developconference.com

Whitmore is the audio keynote at this year's Develop conference

John Broomhall is an independent audio director, consultant and content provider
develop@johnbroomhall.co.uk
www.johnbroomhall.co.uk

THE DEVELOP QUIZ

DATE THURSDAY JUNE 18th 2009
VENUE SWAY BAR (HOLBORN)
CITY LONDON

- UNIQUE INDUSTRY NETWORKING EVENT
- COMPETE AGAINST LEADING STUDIOS
- EXTENSIVE PRE AND POST EVENT COVERAGE

PRIZES

FIRST PLACE TROPHY, £2000 AD CREDIT IN DEVELOP, CHAMPAGNE*

SECOND PLACE LUNCH & INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVELOP TEAM, CHAMPAGNE*

THIRD PLACE CHAMPAGNE*

* bottle of champaigne for each member of the team - 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams

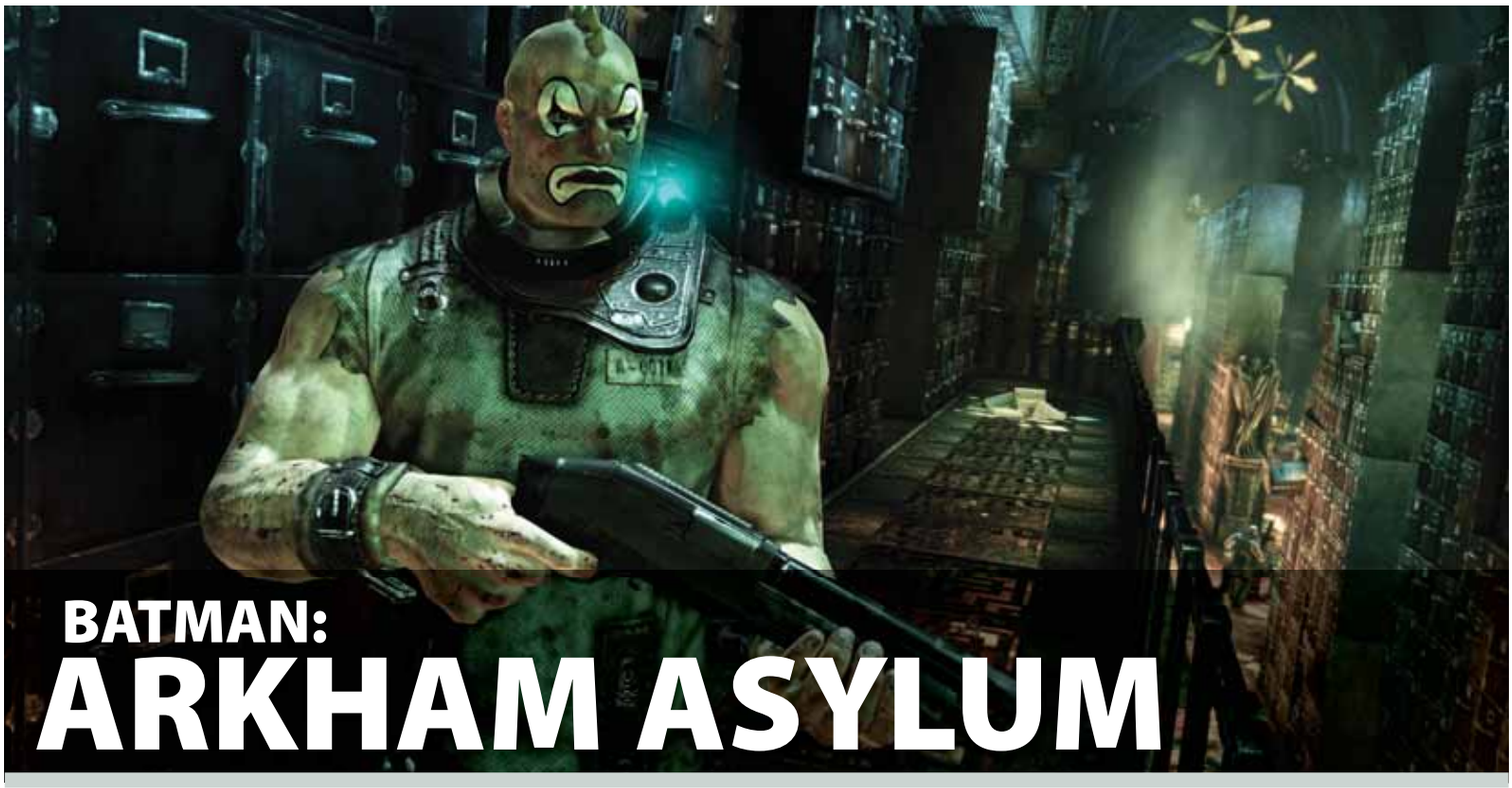
COME TO OUR NEXT DEVELOPERS' NETWORKING EVENT FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN **BIG**

Last quiz winners: **Zoë Mode London**

FOR INFORMATION & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

jaz.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk or call +44 (0)1992 535 647

EPICDIARIES



BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

The door to a part of the DC Universe never seen before outside of comic books is about to be opened: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, Eidos and Rocksteady Studios are using Unreal Engine 3 to bring *Batman: Arkham Asylum* to PC, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 on the heels of *The Dark Knight*'s box office tidal wave.

"We have always seen technology as a means to an end, so for this reason we switched to middleware as soon as we moved onto PS3 and Xbox 360 development," explains Sefton Hill, director and owner of London-based Rocksteady.

"We evaluated the different options in the marketplace, and Unreal Engine 3 was the best choice for us for two main reasons. First, the creative tools for artists and designers are excellent. Second, the design of the tools is driven by a game development studio which shares a similar philosophy to us – that the creative staff must be empowered to unleash their imaginations to create great results. This gave us every confidence that, as Epic developed Unreal, it would remain consistent with Rocksteady's requirements in the future."

Development started with a team of 40, many of whom had been working with UE3 on various game concepts. That team eventually grew to over 60. When the game ships, total development time will be 21 months from start to finish including pre and post-production.

"Using Unreal allowed us to start work on the gameplay from day one," adds Hill. "When creating your own technology, the game team is often waiting for the technology team to deliver their tools, which means that even games that have been in development for over two years have often had less than one year of work on the gameplay."

Hill believes UE3's tools remove technology hurdles that restrict many creative professionals from being able to realise their potential. He said the tools make game development about the talent and imagination of artists and designers as opposed to just engine programmers.

"This also frees up your engine team to be much more creative, as well. I know some of our engine team have found ways to use the tools which has surprised even Epic."

Another advantage of using UE3 is its cross-platform interoperability. Hill said each platform has its own inherently unique requirements, so it's important to tailor content to maximise cross-platform results. He added that using UE3 allowed work on all three platforms running very quickly.

"We have an excellent relationship with Epic, and I cannot speak highly enough of them," adds Hill. "They have developed such powerful technology, provided great hands-on support through the Unreal Developer Network, and have been excellent hosts when we have visited them. All this, and they still find time to develop amazing games!"

Rocksteady's team makes full use of UE3 technology to bring Batman's spectrum of dark environments to life.

"This universe is so rich and diverse; we set ourselves the goal to build a game world with the *Batman* DNA flowing through its veins," said Hill. "A key reason to set the game on Arkham Island was to have the player see and feel the history of this universe as they play. Our overall goal was simply to deliver an authentic Batman game that was great fun."

Batman: Arkham Asylum is the third game featuring The Caped Crusader that's powered by UE3. Midway released *Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe* last year, and Sony Online Entertainment is developing the MMO, *DC Universe Online*, for release early next year. *Thanks to Rocksteady Studios for speaking with freelance reporter John Gaudiosi for this story, which will be posted in full at* **www.unrealtechnology.com**

Batman: Arkham Asylum is developed by London-based Rocksteady using Unreal Engine 3

UPCOMING EPIC ATTENDED EVENTS:

Electronic Entertainment Expo
Los Angeles, CA
June 2-4, 2009

GameHorizon Conference
Newcastle, England
June 23-24, 2009

Develop Conference
Brighton, England
July 14-16, 2009

Please email: mrein@epicgames.com for appointments.

To discuss anything raised in this column or general licensing opportunities for Epic Games' *Unreal* engine, contact: **mrein@epicgames.com**

FOR RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE VISIT:
www.epicgames.com/epic_jobs.html

Mark Rein is vice president of Epic Games based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1992 Mark has worked on Epic's licensing and publishing deals, business development, public relations, academic relations, marketing and business operations.
www.epicgames.com

be inspired

Save up to £150
Book by 10 June

14 JULY 2009
develop
evolve

evolve is a new one-day event which will open the Develop Conference on Tuesday 14 July, and a new track within the conference on Wednesday 15 July. Evolve will focus on how to develop games for new platforms including mobile, iPhone and XBLA, new technologies and new markets like social and casual gaming. It will help game developers tackle the issues arising from emerging platforms and digital marketplaces, connected gaming, user-generated content and cross-over between games and Internet services.

Who's Speaking?

KEYNOTE

Resetting the Game
David Perry, Industry Consultant
David is one of the few luminaries in the business and commonly gets in trouble for speaking his mind, so get ready for a no-bull guide to the future!

- **How Today's Social Networks Will Change How You Make, Play and Sell Games Tomorrow**
  Kristian Segerstrale, Playfish
- **PlayStation Home - First Term Report**
  Peter Edwards, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
- **20 Great Innovations in Casual, Social and Mobile Games That You Should Steal**
  Stuart Dredge, Pocket Gamer
- **After the iPhone Honeymoon: Where Next for Apple's Mobile?**
  Panel Chair: Matthew Kumar, Freelance Journalist
- **Taking Your Game to iPhone and Android, Without Killing Your Team**
  Chris White, Glu Mobile
- **10 Things Nobody Tells You About Digital Distribution and Self-publishing That You Must Understand to Succeed**
  Martyn Brown, Team 17
- **Crossing Over in a World Gone Casual**
  Panel Chair: Matt Spall, Playora
- **The Fight For Playtime: What Do Social Networking Sites Have To Offer The Games Industry?**
  Panel Chair: Tom Armitage, Schulze & Webb

Other speakers at the Develop Conference include:

Autodesk • Bizarre Creations • Climax • Creative Assembly • Crytek • Disney Black Rock Studios • Eutechnyx • Glc02 • FluffyLogi • Google • Guerrilla Games • Gusto Games • Hansoft • Kerb • Lightning Fish Games • Lionhead • Matmi • Media Molecule • Microsoft • MySpace • Nokia • Mediatonic • Microsoft • The Mustard Corporation • Rare • Realtime Worlds • Silicon Knights • Travellers Tales • Ubisoft • Zoe Mode

So make sure you stay ahead of the game this year - come to Develop in Brighton and evolve

www.developconference.com

Mobile Sponsor: n-gage by Nokia
International Media Sponsor: develop
Media Sponsor: casualgaming.biz
Media Sponsor: ME
Media Sponsor: AUDIO MEDIA
Media Sponsor: music4games
Media Sponsor: IMAGINE
Media Sponsor: gamesindustry.biz
Member Discounts: Tiga, igda
Organised by: tandem events

Tokyo Office Now Open

Universally Speaking can announce the opening of its new Japanese office in the heart of Tokyo.

Fully operational from the 1st April 2009, we can now provide a "one stop" solution for your Global Localisation supporting Japanese import/export gaming requirements.

www.usspeaking.com

info@usspeaking.com

SPECIALIST GAMES SERVICES

Localisation

With a large internal team as well as a global network of games specialised linguists, Universally Speaking covers all languages, genres of games, and gaming platforms.

Quality Assurance

From its secure premises, Universally Speaking provides the full suite of Quality Assurance services. Its highly experienced QA department is equipped with hardware for all platforms: Sony, MS, Nintendo, PC, and Mobile. We provide Functionality QA, Compliance QA (TRC, TCR and LOT), Localisation QA, Brand Management QA, Age Rating QA, Online QA and per request Focus Group Testing.

Audio Services

Universally Speaking offers a complete audio service, including audio composition to clients' exact requirements, as well as voice over recordings across all languages.

DTP Services

Universally Speaking's range of localisation does not only cover in-game texts and manuals. Its DTP team, fully updated with the latest regulations in each territory, is able to re-design game manuals and packages for any territories.

Universally Speaking UK

Priory Chambers, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 2BH, UK
T: +44 (0)1480 210621

Universally Speaking Japan

2F, 5-26-26 Higashi-Ooi, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0011 Japan
T: +81 (0)3 6712 1177

DIRECTORY

The world's premier listing of games development studios, tools, outsourcing specialists, services and courses…

PEOPLE:
Rob Crossley joins Develop as online editor
p56

TOOLS:
Perforce releases free Server Log analyser
p58

SERVICES:
Hansoft expands with new senior engineer
p60

KEY CONTACTS

STUDIOS

Blitz Games Studios	+44 (0) 1926 880 000
Denki	www.denki.co.uk
nDreams	+44(0) 1252 375754
Razorback	www.razorback.co.uk
Realtime Worlds	+44 (0) 1382 202 821
Stainless Games	jobs@stainlessgames.com
Strawdog Studio	+44 (0) 1332 258 862

TOOLS

bluegfx	+44 (0) 1483 467 200
Epic Games	+1 919 870 1516
Fork Particle	00 (1) 925 417 1785

SERVICES

3D Creation Studio	+44 (0) 151 236 9992
Air Studios	+44 (0) 207 794 0660
Air Edel	+44 (0) 207 486 6466
High Score	+44 (0) 1295 738 337
Ian Livingstone	+44 (0) 1483 421 491
Partnertrans	+44 (0) 1753 247 731
Philips amBX	www.ambx.com
Testronic Labs	+44 (0)1753 653 722
Tsunami Music	+44 (0) 207 350 2828
Universally Speaking	+44 (0) 1480 210 621

COURSES

University of Hull	+44 (0) 1482 465 951

RATES
1/4 page: £450 (or £200/month if booked for a minimum of six months)

To get your company featured here contact: jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk T: 01992 535 647

CREDIT CRUNCH? YEAH! WHATEVER!
Game-Audio
Music
Sound Design
Voiceover
Localisation
Why pay crazy London studio prices under the illusion that you are getting better quality? We pride ourselves in realistic pricing, a professional service and outstanding audio quality. Value for money is out there...
HighScore productions
"Working with Hugh and the High Score guys ran like clockwork, extremely professional results whilst having a friendly attitude."
Simon Barford, Blitz Games Studios
www.high-score.co.uk +44 (0) 1295 738337

Studio News

This month: Develop Online, Trion and Propaganda Games

Former Edge Online writer Rob Crossley has joined **Develop** as online editor. Rob is a significant boost to *Develop*'s forthcoming online expansion, extending coverage to the development sector of North America and other territories.

"We are delighted to welcome Rob onboard," said editor-in-chief Michael French. "*Develop* continues to go from strength to strength in both its print and online incarnations – adding Rob to the team will further support our ambitions to make it a truly global brand."

Crossley is also contributing to the website of *Develop*'s sister-site *MCV*, and to the newly launched GameBizBlog.com.

www.developmag.com

Trion World Networks has released a statement confirming that the group's president and chief creative officer has been 'transitioned out', fanning speculation that behind company doors the group is going through a turbulent period.

An official announcement from the online game developer confirmed that Jon Van Caneghem 'no longer holds any operational responsibilities at Trion'.

The statement described Van Caneghem's departure as 'part of the natural evolution of the growing company'. It also said it will 'always rely' on the paradigm that great games need both great processes as well as great teams.

Trion has so far raised over $100 million since its formation in 2006. The group currently has its first two projects in development; one a fantasy MMO developed in partnership with the Sci-Fi Channel, the other also an MMO with Van Caneghem as project head.

'JVC' – as the publisher names him – did not provide any comment in the company statement. His responsibilities will be spread across a senior team.

www.trionworld.com

Experienced industry veteran Dan Tudge has departed from EA subsidiary BioWare to join Disney's **Propaganda Games**.

Tudge's most recent project was the BioWare RPG *Dragon Age: Origins*, where he acted as executive producer and project director.

Trudge leaves his role with that game still in production, as Disney Interactive announces his appointment as vice president and general manager at Vancouver-based Propaganda Games.

Propaganda – the team behind the 2008 edition of *Turok* – has a workforce of over 130 for Trudge to work with, with staff sharing production on two unannounced titles.

"Dan comes to Disney Interactive Studios with tremendous leadership experience in overseeing large development teams that release industry-leading products," said Jean-Marcel Nicolai, senior vice president of global production at Disney Interactive Studios.

Trudge's thirteen years of experience span across several companies, including Relic Entertainment and Morgan Media. He also managed his own independent studio which eventually became Exile Interactive.

propagandagames.go.com

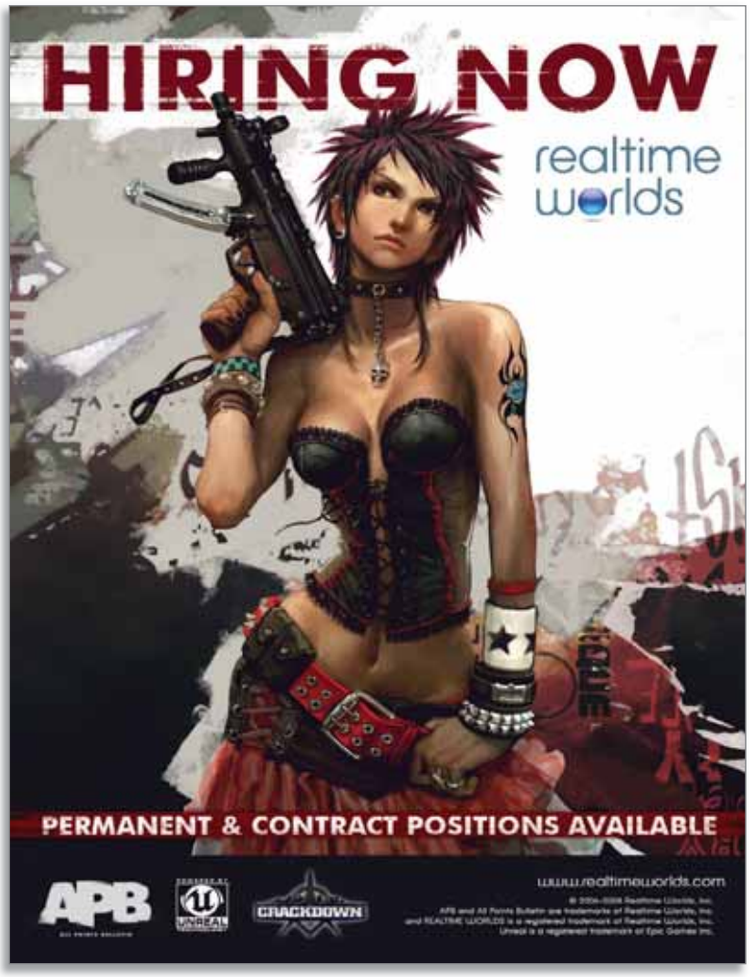
Blitz Games Studios 01926 880000 www.BlitzGames.com

Denki www.denki.co.uk

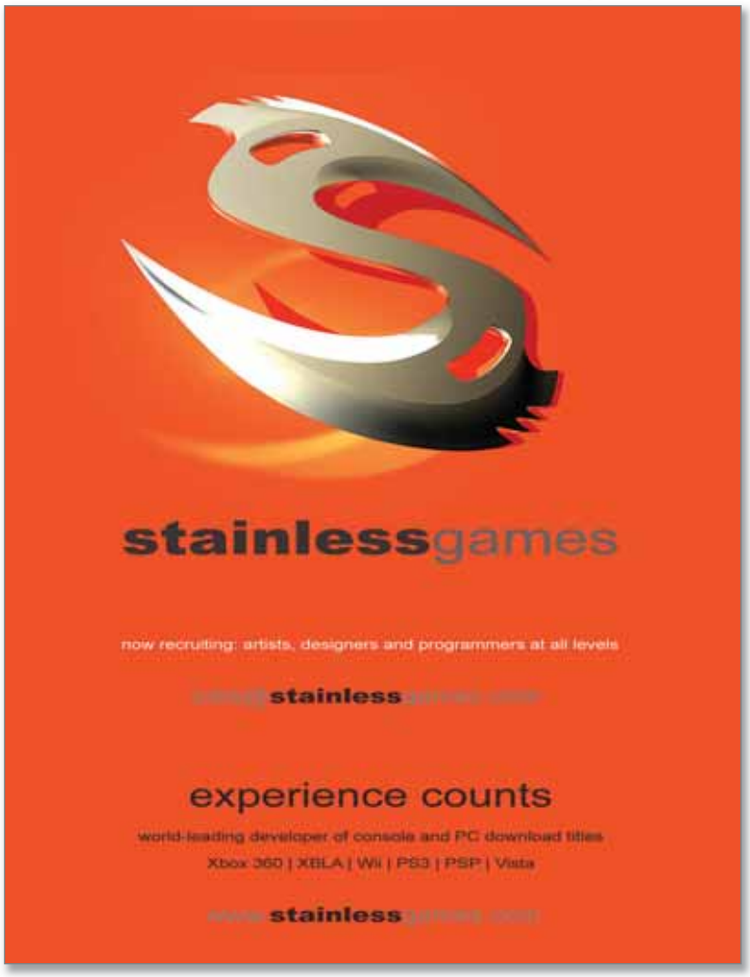
nDreams +44 (0) 1252 375754 www.ndreams.com

Razorback Developments jobs@razorback.co.uk www.razorback.co.uk

Real Time Worlds 01382 202821 www.realtimeworlds.com



Stainless Games jobs@stainlessgames.com www.stainlessgames.com


stainlessgames
now recruiting: artists, designers and programmers at all levels
stainless
experience counts
world-leading developer of console and PC download titles
Xbox 360 | XBLA | Wii | PS3 | PSP | Vista
stainless

Strawdog Studios 01332 258862 www.strawdogstudios.co.uk

strawdog studios
GAMES IN THE MAKING
NOW RECRUITING
We are currently looking for programmers, artists and designers to work on several exciting new original games, so come and join the team!
PLEASE SEND YOUR CV TO:
jobs@strawdogstudios.com
www.strawdogstudios.com
www.geongame.com
info@strawdogstudios.com
Strawdog Studios Ltd
The ID Centre Lathkill House
The RTC Business Park
London Road Derby DE24 8UP
United Kingdom

Tools News

Abyssal Engine integrated with RakNet

The Abyssal Engine is to benefit from integration with Jenkins Software's RakNet networking technology.

Abyssal Technology's OpenGL-based game engine is being enhanced with the RakNet C++ networking SDK to allow for multiplayer and massively multiplayer game development.

Jenkins is currently planning to demonstrate RakNet multiplayer functionality in an online 3D world environment by creating a deathmatch game demo..

The Abyssal Engine is designed to enable the rapid creation and testing of all game necessary assets, while the runtime system is carefully optimised for rendering large world environments. The platform also promises to allow for massive numbers of playable and artificial characters and loading of large datasets.

www.abyssalengine.com

Perforce Server Log Analyzer made live

PERFORCE SOFTWARE

Perforce Software has released the Perforce Server Log Analyzer.

The new web service provides system administrators with a diagnostic view of their Perforce Server, allowing them to identify opportunities to increase both performance and availability.

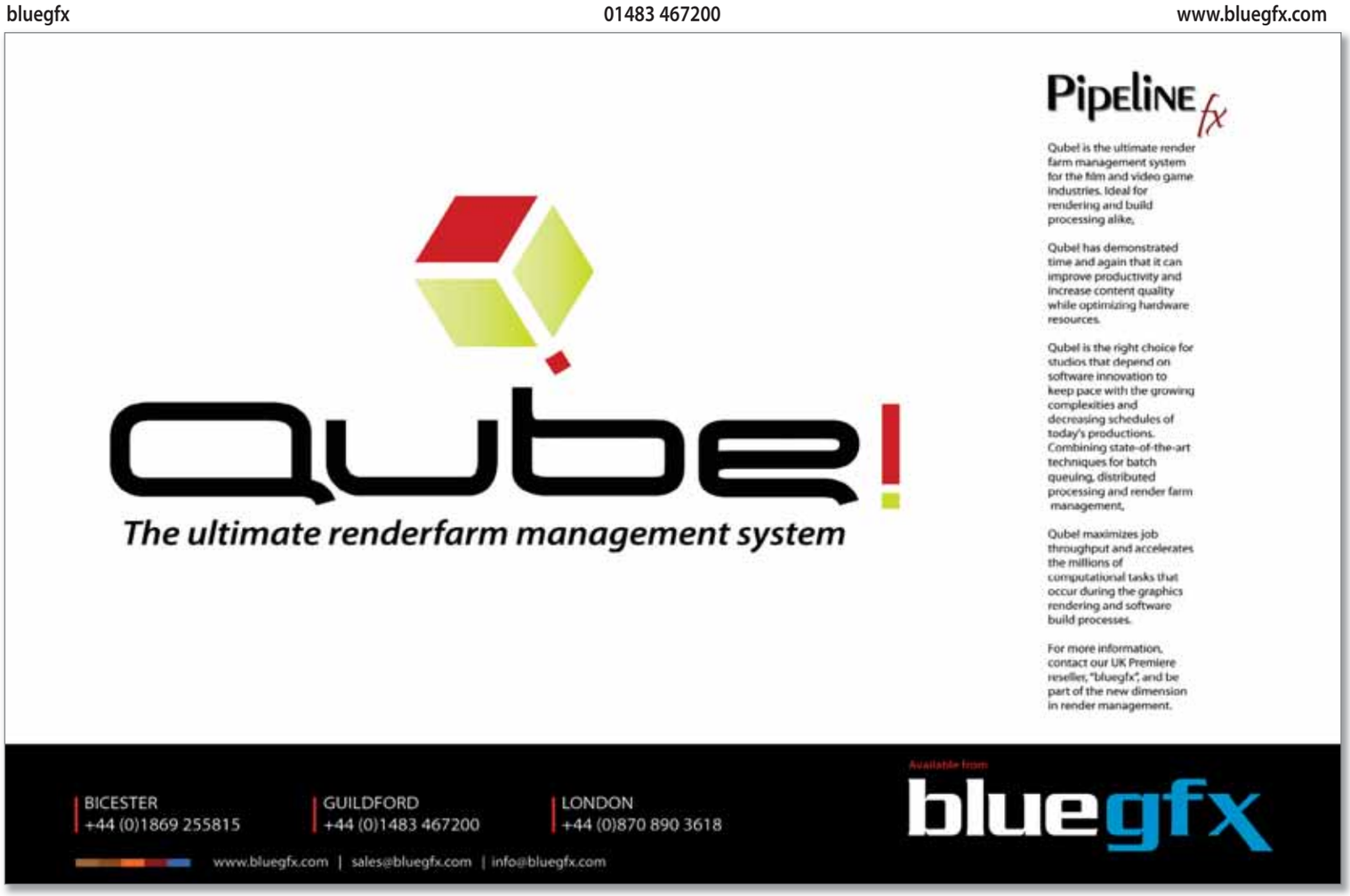
"Perforce's centralised server has always provided a single source of information to audit usage," said Jason Novecosky, development manager at Perforce Software. "Until now, our server diagnostics had to be installed on your system. With PSLA, we take that extra work out of the equation."

A free service available to download from the website, the PSLA lets administrators upload Perforce Server log files for instant analysis.

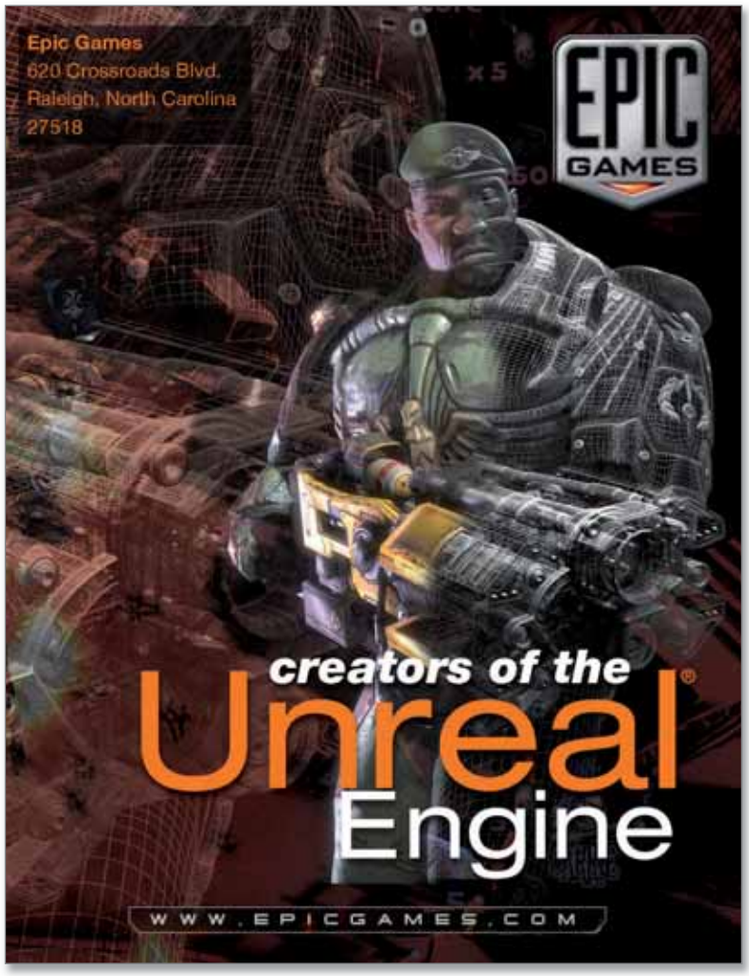
"Providing server analytics on demand makes our customers' jobs easier, and it guarantees that they're using our latest and greatest diagnostic tools," added Kersti Rose, director of Perforce technical support.

www.perforce.com

bluegfx 01483 467200 www.bluegfx.com


qube!
The ultimate renderfarm management system
Pipeline fx
Qube! is the ultimate render farm management system for the film and video game industries. Ideal for rendering and build processing alike,
Qube! has demonstrated time and again that it can improve productivity and increase content quality while optimizing hardware resources.
Qube! is the right choice for studios that depend on software innovation to keep pace with the growing complexities and decreasing schedules of today's productions. Combining state-of-the-art techniques for batch queuing, distributed processing and render farm management,
Qube! maximizes job throughput and accelerates the millions of computational tasks that occur during the graphics rendering and software build processes.
For more information, contact our UK Premiere reseller, "bluegfx", and be part of the new dimension in render management.
BICESTER
+44 (0)1869 255815
GUILDFORD
+44 (0)1483 467200
LONDON
+44 (0)870 890 3618
www.bluegfx.com | sales@bluegfx.com | info@bluegfx.com
Available from
bluegfx

Epic +1-919-870-1516 www.epicgames.com

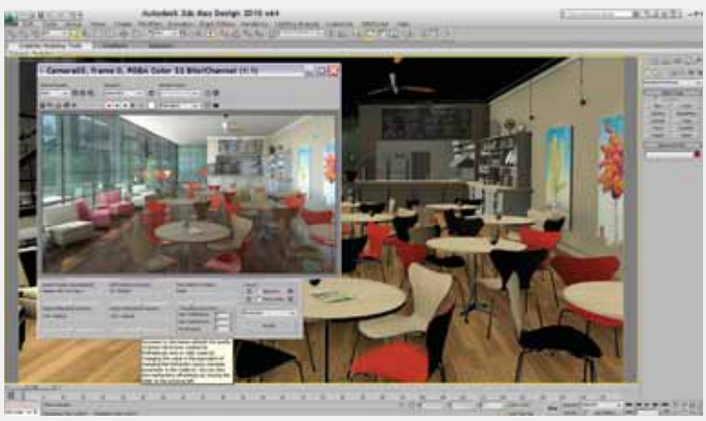


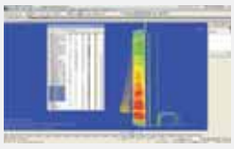
Fork Particle 00 (1) 925 417 1785 info@forkparticle.com

BE LEGENDARY.
"Fork Particle has all the essential features and tools that Turbine needs to build the high quality special effects that our loyal players demand while significantly cutting down on content production time."
- Christopher Dyl, Turbine CTO
Powered by:
FORK PARTICLE
Professional
Particle System Middleware
The Lord of the Rings Online
MINES OF MORIA
Evaluation:
www.forkparticle.com
turbine
THE LORD OF THE RINGS ONLINE™ interactive video game © 2009 Turbine, Inc. and patents pending. All rights reserved. Middle-Earth Poster Map © 2007 The Saul Zaentz Company, d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises (SZC), under license to Turbine, Inc. All rights reserved. "The Lord of the Rings Online", "Mines of Moria", "Shadows of Angmar", The Watcher logo, "Conquer the World Beneath", "The Lord of the Rings", and the names of the characters, events, items and places therein are trademarks or registered trademarks of SZC under license to Turbine, Inc. Turbine and the Turbine logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Turbine, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other jurisdictions. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Tool Spotlight

AUTODESK 3DS MAX 2010





Area of Expertise:
3D modelling, animation and rendering

Long established as a leading 3D modelling solution for modelling, animation and rendering, the time for 3ds Max's yearly update is again upon us.

The 2010 edition adds a number of powerful new toolsets that enhance world shaping and scene management, while letting developers access software interoperability and pipeline integration support.

One of the most significant additions to 3ds Max is the innovative new Graphite modelling system. The polygon rendering technology offers over 100 tools for advanced polygonal modelling and freeform design. Created to be easy to use and highly customisable, Graphite gives artists intuitive tools to do things such as draw polygon new polygon strips that follow existing topography.

Elsewhere, the application's new Material Explorer delivers a productivity-enhancing toolset that simplifies interaction with materials and objects for complex scene creation.

Integrated mental mill technology lets users develop, test and maintain shaders and shader graphs directly inside 3ds Max. Autodesk's solution is the first 3D modelling and animation program to integrate the technology, and provides real-time visual feedback.

Additionally, as part of PFlowAdvanced, a set of 12 new operators allows for the incorporation of sophisticated particle effects into 3ds Max scenes. Alongside the range of tools, Shape Plus features an enhanced selection of 2D and 3D shapes..

Another element of the significant 2010 update to 3ds Max comes in the form of the new Containers toolset. Containers facilitate flexible workflow collaboration, allowing users to combine multiple objects of a complex scene into a single container.

The numerous other updates include a new xView mesh analyzer, an improved importer for transferring 3D model data between 3ds Max and Autodesk Mudbox, and the new ProSound multitrack audio system, which enables synchronising audio playback with the viewport and rendering tracks to match the playback speeds.

Finally, expanded multiprocessor support means enhanced improvements that build on the many GPU optimisations of earlier 3ds Max versions.

CONTACT:
Autodesk Ltd.
1 Meadow Gate Avenue,
Farnborough Business Park,
Farnborough, Hampshire,
GU14 6FG

Phone: 01252 456600
Fax: 01252 456601
Web: www.autodesk.com

Services News

Hansoft hires new senior software engineer

Integrated project management specialist Hansoft has hired Haraldur D Thorvaldsson as a new senior software engineer.

A recent PhD graduate in computer science from Washington University in St. Louis, Haraldur had previously worked at Icelandic mobile networking specialist Oz.com. The new member of the Hansoft team also worked as chief technical officer for SmartVR, designing software for multi-user virtual three-dimensional worlds.

Thorvaldsson will be joining his new fellow employees at the Hansoft office in Uppsala, Sweden.

Hansoft continues to provide its successful solution for collaborative scheduling, Agile, bug tracking, workload coordination, and document management, which is currently used by developers in more than 20 countries.

The new 5.3 version of Hansoft's technology now includes the Asset Pipeline Editor to assist in the management of complex art creation flows, the Workflow Editor for testing, quality iteration and management sign-offs, and the new flow-based Report Generator.

www.hansoft.se

Grin gets bitten by the outsourcing bug

Developer Grin and digital content provider Streamline Studios have completed an art pipeline collaboration for the *Terminator Salvation* game.

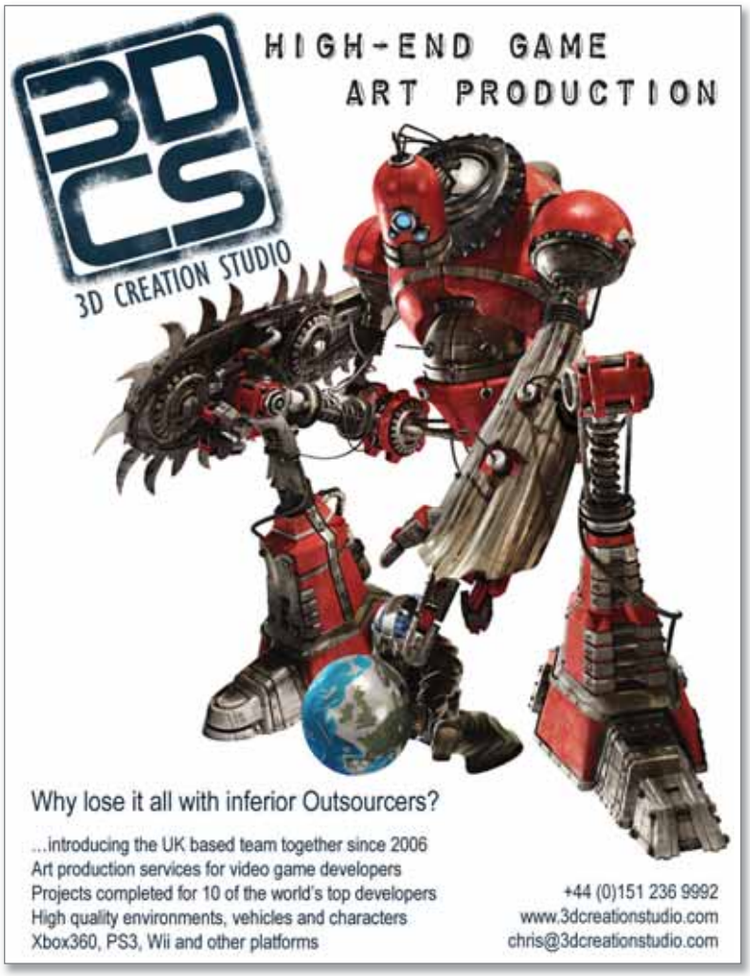
"We couldn't have made this game as immersive or hit the quality level with any other partner than Streamline Studios," said Bo Andersson, founder and CEO of Grin. "*Terminator* is our first major collaboration with Streamline Studios and they really put their hearts into this production, which is why we absolutely recommend them to anyone looking to create high-end content today. What's left is for Grin is to polish the last levels, gameplay and submit the game – and then the End begins."

"Co-production of whole art pipelines is the future, and working with Grin on *Terminator Salvation* was our next step to evolve as a company," added Alexander L. Fernandez, co-founder and CEO of Streamline Studios. "After seeing our work in some of the biggest titles of all time, we see a changing landscape for game and asset production and we know our alignment with Grin is a testament to the quality both of our companies deliver. The partnership has given everyone involved a lot of flexibility and the best of all resources to deliver a *Terminator* game that is going to be huge."

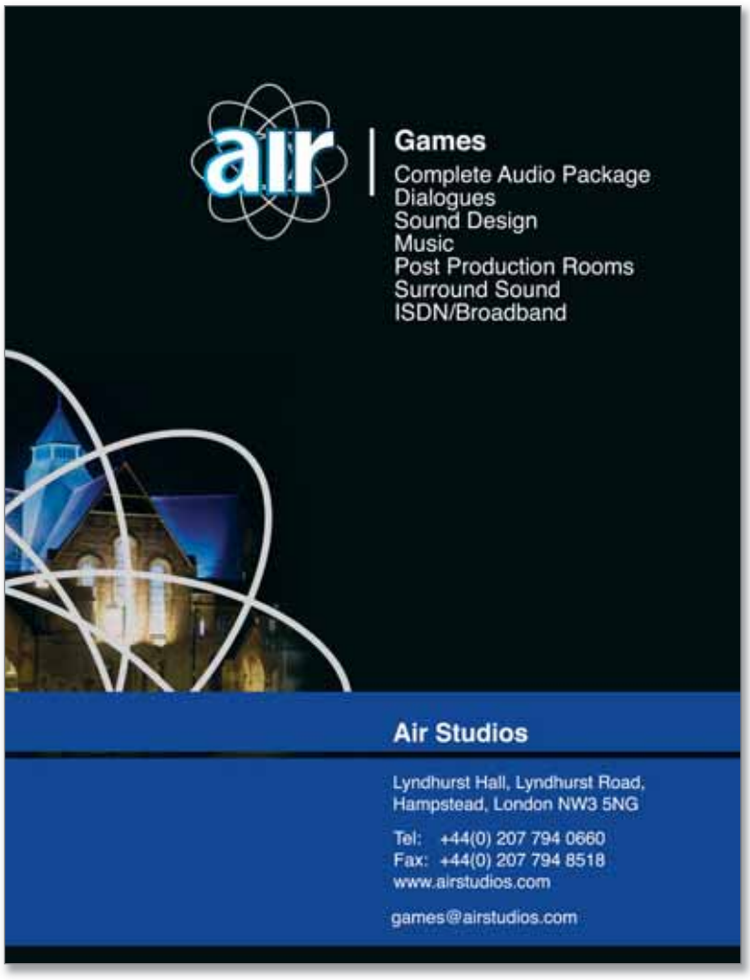
The work on *Terminator Salvation* is the first collaboration between the two companies since the announcement of their partnership last August, and the pair has confirmed that they plan to extend their working relationship.

www.grin.se

3D Creation Studio +44(0)151 236 9992 www.3dcreationstudio.com


3DCS
3D CREATION STUDIO
HIGH-END GAME
ART PRODUCTION
Why lose it all with inferior Outsourcers?
...introducing the UK based team together since 2006
Art production services for video game developers
Projects completed for 10 of the world's top developers
High quality environments, vehicles and characters
Xbox360, PS3, Wii and other platforms
+44 (0)151 236 9992
www.3dcreationstudio.com
chris@3dcreationstudio.com

Air Studios 0207 7940660 www.airstudios.com



Air Edel +4 (0) 207 486 6466 www.air-edel.co.uk

Ian Livingstone 01483 421 491 www.ianlivingstone.net

Video Game
Composer
since 1994
Recent Scores include
Battlefield 1943 - orchestral score at Abbey Rd
Race Driver Grid (Codemasters)
Company Of Heroes: Opposing Fronts (THQ / Relic)
Trivial Pursuit (EA)
Burn Zombie Burn (Pinnacle / Doublesix)
Iron Man: Aerial Assault (Paramount / Doublesix)
Monopoly: Here & Now The World Edition (EA)
Batman Begins (EA / Warner Bros)
Facilities Include
5.1 Studio (Guildford based - clients welcome).
Nuendo / Protools
8 x Gigastudio rigs, custom orchestral library
Live orchestral packages available
All styles and platforms covered
Online showreel available at www.ianlivingstone.net
To discuss your future projects contact Ian on
e ian@ianlivingstone.net t +44(0)1483 421491
ianLivingstone

High Score Productions +44 (0) 1295 738 337 www.high-score.co.uk

Partnertrans +44 (0) 1753 247 731 www.partnertrans.com

PHILIPS amBX www.ambx.com

Creativity
at your fingertips
SDK free to use. Download now.
Visit our new microsite http://developer.ambx.com
Light
Intensity
Wind
Excitement
Energy
Immersion
Speed
Vibration
The new and unique SDK gives game developers the power to realise a totally immersive experience. With the amBX range of APIs, tools, applications, guidelines, dedicated website and our first class support forum, it has never been easier to integrate amBX creatively into your software.
amBX

Testronic Labs +44 (0) 1753 653 722 www.testroniclabs.com

Quality Matters
At Testronic Labs, we help you produce great quality games. For us, quality means a game that exceeds the expectations of the players, a game that works on every platform and reads right in every language, a game that's just right for its audience. We're here to make it better.
Testing on all major console, PC and iPhone platforms
Functionality testing
Translation and localization
Localization testing
PC compatibility
Compliance testing
MMO performance testing
Usability / focus group testing
New Player Experience (NPE) testing
TESTRONIC
For further information, please contact:
sales-tl@testroniclabs.com | www.testroniclabs.com

Tsunami Music +44 (0) 207 350 2828 www.tsunami.co.uk

tsunami
MUSIC
LEADING MUSIC COMPOSITION & SOUND DESIGN
FOR THE VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY
RECENT CLIENTS INCLUDE
EA GAMES • WARNER BROS • THQ • UBISOFT
EIDOS • CODEMASTERS • KUJU
www.tsunami.co.uk
E: info@tsunami.co.uk // T: +44 (0)20 7350 2828

Universally Speaking 01480 210621 www.usspeaking.com

Specialist Games Services

Localisation
» Global network of games specialised linguists
» Translators to cover all genres of games
» All languages covered
» In game, scripts, paper parts and marketing translations

Quality Assurance
» All platforms (Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo, PC and Mobile)
» Localisation QA
» Compliance checks for TRC, TCR and LOT approval
» Functionality QA

Audio
» Voice overs across all languages
» Full casting service
» Pre and post production including lip synching
» Highly experienced voice directors and engineers

US
UNIVERSALLY SPEAKING

Universally Speaking
Priory Chambers, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambs., PE19 2BH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1480 210621 info@usspeaking.com www.usspeaking.com

TRAINING NEWS

University of Abertay hosts HCI conference

The University of Abertay Dundee has welcomed experts from across the globe to explore the usage of games as education tools.

Over 40 experts from countries as diverse as Australia, Lithuania and Norway have converged at the event to discuss teaching through play, and play through teaching.

The conference was organised by Dr Colin Cartwright and Dr Jacqui Archibald, who lecture in Abertay's School of Computing and Creative Technologies.

"When children play with blocks, they stack them, knock them over, sort them by colour, and they learn through playing," said Dr. Cartwright. "When people learn to use a computer, they lose this tangible interface, but learn to use a keyboard and mouse with representations of real world objects – folders, desktops, photo albums. HCI is concerned with developing better interfaces to the virtual world that mimic the tangible benefits of physical artefacts, and creating opportunities to play and to learn through play in both the real and virtual worlds is the goal of this conference."

The conference is also exploring how Universities can cooperate with research and teaching initiatives to push forward ideas. Professor Lachlan MacKinnon, programme chair for the conference, explained: "Many exciting projects are already under way with this technology, allowing people to connect to their computer to fabric, skin, lights, instruments, fruit, and every other imaginable physical tangible object.

"However, we are also concerned to ensure the widest possible access to these projects, developing interfaces to ensure that the inexperienced, those with different levels of abilities, the fearful, and the experienced computer users can all benefit from these technological developments."

www.abertay.co.uk

Develop Magazine 01992 535 647 www.developmag.com

develop DIRECTORY

GREAT ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

CONTACT: JAZ

jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk

Tel: 01992 535 647

The University of Hull +44(0) 1482 465951 www.mscgames.com

MSc Games Programming
Hardcore Games Programming, Physics and AI
Your fast track to a job as a games programmer
www.MScGames.com

"The course is rigorous and demanding, but in the end worth the hard work. I got two job offers from leading companies in the games industry within a month of completing my course. The best part is that I didn't really have to struggle to get them." Hussain Sheikh 2006 MSc
For more quotes from ex-students, examples of student work and syllabus information please visit www.mscgames.com.
PhD and BSc study also available.

Image courtesy of Codemasters. All rights reserved.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

* **You have a successful studio,** but it's hard to find the graduates you need to keep your studio competitive, and you want to impress the needs of your business on academia.
* **You run a university course** in games programming or art, but it's difficult to forge partnerships with studios to access up to date industry knowledge and find placements for your students.

Relationships can be difficult to build even if you do know who the right people are.
GAMES:EDU is a unique platform for professional networking, bringing together the UK's brightest game developers and lecturers. It features the best in British and international case studies, and provides an opportunity for you to discuss your burning topics with the most relevant people in the UK.

GAMES:EDU:09:

/ 14th July / alongside Develop Conference in Brighton

Speakers include:
Richard Wilson (TIGA)
Susan Gold (IGDA/Global Game Jam)
+ more including Microsoft, Abertay & Blitz Games Studios

Early Bird tickets only **£25** until 10th June

Look to www.gamesedu.co.uk for updates

GAMES:EDU is produced by Pixel-Lab and Tandem Events

Pixel–Lab

tandem events

develop in brighton

Letters

If you would like to voice your opinion on any of the content within Develop, please send your letters and comments to the editor-in-chief at: *michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk*

Skipping the generation gap

Seamus Blackley's comments last month about a lack of new talent coming into the games industry has hit a nerve…

With regard to Seamus Blackley's comments I feel compelled to argue the other side of the fence. While I appreciate his concern that designers working on big-selling sequels will struggle to achieve 'rock star' status in our industry, there exists an area where the talent is definitely going from strength to strength: the world of indie games.

Thanks to the likes of the XNA community program, the iPhone and the ever reliable PC platforms the indie scene for game development has become richer and more original than ever, and there are certainly no signs of it slowing down this year. That's one of the reasons why we created our 1UP programme, so that we could encourage talent in our industry and help these ambitious souls to achieve their dreams.

With the recent titles that have been released and some of the unfinished ones that I've seen lately I can't help but have a far rosier outlook on the design talent that will appear in our industry over the coming years.

Chris Swan
Business Development Director
Blitz Arcade

I have to add that the decisions studios are making are hurting us 'old boys' as well. I've spent 23 years as a developer but through the nature of the companies I worked at, I have ended up as a failry niche 2D artist. The problem is, you walk into any place with that skill set and the 3D guys suddenly have all their prayers answered, as they now have someone to take on the undesirable (to them) 2D work. What that ultimately does is tie you to the restricted role, whilst leaving the rest to progress and develop.

After the latest redundancy, I now find myself with considerable experience in all the places nobody else wanted to earn it in. But you show me a place that will take someone on and offer them the chance to develop into a desired role.

In the last 23 years, I haven't received a single iota of training, because training someone costs money and doesn't get the job done… and hey, that's what your spare time is for isn't it? Why train someone when you can send the work abroad to people who work for less, and have expended their own money getting the training for you.

It really is about time the studios started giving back to the employees as much as they get, and helping those employees to grow.

If they don't, then there are more people like myself who are going to end up wasting away, leaving the industry full of fragmented development and shattered ideas.

Lee C
Posted to developmag.com

Hot Jobs From Aardvark Swift

Network Programmer x 2 London LC472FN
£Excellent + Benefits and Bonuses

Our client, one of the industry's biggest developers, are seeking experienced network programmers to work on developing the online aspects of fun family orientated casual games. A background in games or social networking development would be advantageous. Contact lisa@aswift.com

Gameplay programmer Cambridge LC808F
£Competitive + Bonuses and Benefits

Our client, the developers of one of the most popular third person action titles of last year, are seeking an experienced gameplay programmer. The ideal person will have an in-depth knowledge of developing story based action adventure titles for next gen consoles. Contact lisa@aswift.com

Programmers x 5 Australia HH03525F
AU$ Excellent plus benefits and relocation

Our client are one of the largest and most prestigious developers in Australia. They are working on multiple next gen projects for several high profile publishers. Expansion plans for 2009 mean they are looking for programmers with a background in either AI, Gameplay, Graphics, Networking or Tools. Great company in a fantastic location - for more information on these and other opportunities outside the UK. Contact hollie@aswift.com

Online Assistant Producer London DJ95HAP
to £25k plus good benefits

My Client is on of the worlds most respected games developers and publishers, and is massively respected within the industry, and has a key new role within the Online Marketing Team, supporting the development, production and delivery of gaming titles and non-game brands. The main objectives of this position are to work in conjunction with the Online Services Producer to produce and deliver compelling, creative, fully localised content and promotions for content within our clients ever-expanding Online universe. More details available on request. Contact danny@aswift.com

Senior Games Designer Yorkshire SH856GD
£DOE

This is a leading independent developer are currently seeking to recruit an experienced Senior Designer for their latest project. Strong financial backing means they are able to offer good stability and a solid career path. Candidates must have experience of one full development cycle in a 'Senior' role. Experience of developing for DS/Wii platforms would be highly favourable. Contact simon@aswift.com

XSI Animator x 10 Midlands DS728CGA
£30k to £40k

My client requires strong Character Animators to work on a Kids TV series. This is a permanent role. You will be required to work within a new team and create a new series of a successful Children's TV show. Candidates would ideally have experience in creating animations geared towards a young audience. The package used is XSI, though strong Maya experience is considered. Contact dan@aswift.com

Senior Environment/Character Artist
Cambridgeshire DS808SEA
to £40k plus benefits

We require a games industry experienced Environment Artist and a Character Artist to work in one of the UK's most successful studios. Candidates should have industry experience in either Character or Environment respectively, preferably in a Senior role. Experience with the Unreal Engine is especially beneficial. You will be expected to use Maya, however experience in either XSI or 3DS Max will be considered. Contact dan@aswift.com

Web www.aswift.com Tel 01709 876877

Aardvark Swift Recruitment Silicon House, Farfield Park, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 5DB

Aardvark Swift

MY FAVOURITE GAME

Notable developers tell us which game* warmed their heart, caught their eye, and ate up their free time…

I LOVE… TETRIS… and ZELDA… and STAR RAIDER… and ULTIMA

by Warren Spector, Junction Point

"If I could only take one game to a desert island and could never play another game as long as I lived, it'd be *Tetris*. It is the best game ever made, and the best game that ever will be made, because you can play forever and never ever get bored. It's the perfect game.

If you asked me which game when played through for the first time gave me more pleasure than anything else, it would be *Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* on the SNES.

Finally, in terms of the game which influenced me the most as a developer, I'd probably have to give you two.

Star Raiders, which I played on the Atari 800, revealed to me that games could transport you to a different place and let you experience things that you could never experience any other way.

The second is *Ultima 4*; the virtues of the avatar. That was what convinced me that games could be something more than just killing monsters, and could say something in the way literature and great films do.

Oh, you wanted me to pick only *one*?"

*Or in Warren Spector's case games – he just wouldn't shut up…

develop FORWARD PLANNER

JUNE 2009

Game Engines
Event: GameHorizon conference
Copy Deadline: May 21st

JULY 2009

Develop Conference – Show Issue
Event: Develop Conference
Copy Deadline: June 18th

AUGUST 2009

Develop Awards round-up
Event: Edinburgh Interactive Festival, GDC Europe
Regional Focus: Scotland
Copy Deadline: July 23rd

SEPTEMBER 2009

Outsourcing Special
Regional Focus: Asia
Copy Deadline: August 14th

OCTOBER 2009

The Future of Game Audio
Copy Deadline: September 17th

NOVEMBER 2009

100th Issue Special Edition
Event: Montreal Game Summit
Regional Focus: Canada
Copy Deadline: October 13th

EDITORIAL enquiries should go through to Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk, or call him on 01992 535646

To discuss **ADVERTISING** contact Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk, or call her on 01992 535647

YOU THINK YOU KNOW US?

THINK AGAIN.

With a well-deserved reputation for bringing excellent and innovative games to all types of players from all over the world, and a massive investment into developing powerful new technology... there's never been a better time to play at Codemasters!

With over 60 no.1 titles in the trophy cabinet, and more to come... we're a leading force in the games industry. Be it action, fantasy, driving or war-based gaming... there's something for everyone. Combine all of this with Codemasters Studio's powerful EGO™ Engine technology and we are making a whole new unstoppable generation of games.

So, with our investment in people, technology and quality, it means that we are built to win! If you want to be part of the fastest growing studio in the UK, take a look at the many positions available.

to find out more go to:
www.codemasters.com

or email:
Developmagazine@codemasters.com

codemasters™

©2008 The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). All rights reserved. "Codemasters"® is a registered trademark owned by Codemasters and the Codemasters logo is a trademark of Codemasters.

BLUEGFX IN GAMES

"bluegfx have continuously demonstrated their ability to implement solutions, offer a consistent, high level of technical expertise and knowledge of their customers' business. They also exhibit an overwhelming commitment towards customer service," says Pete Baxter, SeniorDirector, Autodesk North Europe.

"By building a strong relationship with Autodesk, they are now one of the most successful Media and Entertainment resellers in North Europe. We look forward to this continuing long in to the future."

bluegfx

Autodesk N.European M&E Channel Partner 2009
www.bluegfx.com

bluegfx, Autodesk N.European M&E Channel Partner 2009

BICESTER
+44 (0)1869 255815

GUILDFORD
+44 (0)1483 467200

LONDON
+44 (0)870 890 3618

Autodesk
Authorised Training Centre

Autodesk
Premier Solutions Provider
Media & Entertainment